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# The Inner Witness of the Fourth Gospel

✓ By

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*"Nihil in sacris scripturis prae-  
ter Christum quaerendum"*

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By Lawrence Keister

## PREFACE.

There are questions raised in our present life which require our personal answer. As these questions are defined more clearly we formulate our answer more definitely till we approach our final answer, which is no longer up for review or even subject to change. Thus we are the voluntary or involuntary exemplars of our own theory of existence. We decide for ourselves just what life shall mean for us, and offer to others our solution of the problem of our present existence.

As our mental and moral equipment fits us for this task, we should suffer no real hardship in assuming our responsibility nor ever feel inclined to shirk it by leaving our case to be decided by others or allowing it to go by default. Men are made to act intelligently, morally, and religiously. They are constituted for self-knowledge, for association with their fellows, and for the perception of God and the appreciation of God. So we see that revelation finds a place in man's constitution as well as in God's purpose.

Revelation may be regarded, like nature, as originally given by God and then as continually sustained by Him. This is what we find in the Bible. Here God is revealed to men and this revelation is always valid, just as it is always vital. God reveals Himself in Christ, and all He has made known concerning Himself becomes real and true to the earnest inquirer.

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The study of the Bible becomes most interesting when it becomes man's best means of securing a comprehensive view of existence and a practical working theory for every-day life. No part of the Bible appears to be better adapted to this end than the Gospel of John. It offers efficient aid and genuine comfort to the man who wants to live as a rational, moral, and religious being.

We take the fourth Gospel as the translator gives it to us. Our quotations are from the American Revision, with occasional use of the margin in preference to the text. We have held in mind the fact that John wrote with a practical end in view. Our aim has been kept in harmony with his, and we have never permitted ourself to drift into speculative thinking. In order to reach the right solution of the problem of life, our thinking must accord with the thought of God. Otherwise revelation has missed its chief end for us and we have missed its real meaning.

The study of the fourth Gospel which is here presented, was originally the result of class work in association with earnest students whose interest stimulated thought and incidentally encouraged the teacher of this little group to become the author of this little volume. Interest thus awakened has never waned through years of patient investigation and the slow process of revision, but has steadily increased while the prayer was continually offered that the Spirit Who inspired this Gospel, would also inspire this interpretation of it.

## Preface

Assistance has been secured from every available source. If it was a pleasure to read much of the rich literature of the subject, it is likewise a pleasure to express our indebtedness, in this general way at least, to each writer whose pages have offered their efficient aid. Special acknowledgment must be made of the judicious criticisms and valuable suggestions of Prof. John McNaugher, D.D., of the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, who twice passed upon the manuscript.

This volume is given to the public as one form of ministry which should be no less sacred than the preaching of the Word, because it should be inspired by the same Spirit and should proclaim the same Christ. If it opens the Gospel of John to the mind of any seeker after truth, if it enables any man to know God better, if it throws light on the pathway of a single soul, it will have done something well worth doing.

L. K.

*Scottdale, Pennsylvania.*  
*December, 1914.*



## INTRODUCTION.

The Gospel of John evidently emanated from a mature mind after long years of reflection and after the teachings it contains were tested by experience. As a consequence, we find Christian theology and Christian philosophy, as well as the life of Christ and the history of the brief period covered by His public ministry. As a life of Jesus, it emphasizes certain periods and supplies certain omissions that are essential to convey a true conception of His unique Personality. The last of the Gospels to be written, it is the last also to be read with a proper appreciation of its theological and philosophical significance.

Redemption is the general theme, and the supreme necessity of an adequate Redeemer demands discriminating description and the most satisfactory evidence in proof of His presence and power. Hence, John's thought gathers about the Person of Christ in Whom he finds the solution of every problem of being and well-being. His relation to God and man covers the whole field of moral conflict and moral development. His humanity is typical as well as real. His deity is demonstrated as actual and essential. If we accept Jesus Christ as John accepted Him from personal knowledge, we will accept the Gospel of John as a plain presentation of the greatest Person in history and the greatest theme for human thought.

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We do no violence to our subject when we approach it from the viewpoint of theology, and philosophy, not with the purpose of shaping the gospel according to our theory, but of shaping our theory according to the gospel. Perhaps we may see more clearly from the new angle of vision. According to Sir William Hamilton, "no difficulty emerges in theology which has not previously emerged in philosophy." Philosophy, however, has never been able to solve the problems of theology, because human reason can never safely dispense with the divine thinking. We must, therefore, appropriate the divine thought as the essential fact and factor of our system of knowledge. We must digest it in order to obtain clear, complete, and consistent views of our own and in order to organize it in a rational system as a part of our own mental constitution and for our own mental convenience. The mind of the apostle reveals no conflicting conceptions, no diverting doubts, no unanswered questions, and we are invited to enter into mental and spiritual sympathy with him. If our method is unusual it need not be uninteresting, unfruitful, or unorthodox. We may even receive material aid in forming deeper and truer conceptions of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel; we may thus prepare ourselves for other studies that have an entirely different aim and bearing; we may even nerve ourselves for the divine life in the midst of a sinful world.

It ought to be the earnest desire of every man to know what the author of the fourth Gospel held



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to be true and what he himself believed. We mean the truth the author accepted, part by part, and as one complete whole, forming in his mind one consistent system of thought.. Our reward will be ample if indeed we are able to discover the fundamental truth which was held by John, the metaphysician among the gospel writers. However his teaching may be conveyed, whether by spoken word here recorded, by significant act here interpreted, or by living example here portrayed, our minds must rise above the separate verses and paragraphs and chapters and catch distinct views of those great vistas of thought which were familiar to the mind of John as directly derived from the mind of the Master and as the favorite fields of private meditation.

Our task lies in the realm of New Testament theology, dealing as it does with the original form of New Testament teaching, but we seek no system aside from the organic unity of the Gospel itself. Our study should bring us face to face with the elemental truths of Christianity from the viewpoint of a mind in full sympathy with these truths. If it is suggestive rather than systematic, it may still be effective in bringing us into the living presence of the one great, divine Person, Who is the light and life of men. As we become conscious of His presence and our eyes behold the light emanating from His holy character; as He instructs us by His wisdom, invests us with His love and bids our minds soar like the eagle on the wings of His own triumphant thought; as we consider His power over

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the men who surrounded Him, the impulses that moved them and the ideals that inspired them; as we weigh the events history attributes to these agents and link them with the records of the past and present, we can better appreciate the real significance of the doctrines of the Gospel. They are emanations of life ever vital and ever returning to the soul of man to vitalize it with the breath of God. Our study must therefore develop or dwarf us. It will enable us to know ourselves better as individuals and as related, and better in both our natural and our spiritual life. It will develop within us a deeper faith in Christ or discover an ever-deepening doubt.

Christian doctrine necessarily calls forth a Christian philosophy. Christian truth cannot be conceived or taught as unrelated. It permeates every field of thought and life, and so when doctrine is under consideration, Christianity is the generic term and religion the specific, for Christianity includes all truth and no error, while the ethnic religions include some truth and much error in combination. The thinking man seeks to know the true relation of the soul to God and also the relation of the soul to all things. He needs a comprehensive and consistent system of thought that is true for the world about him as well as for the world within him. Here we find it in the Gospel of John in statements and implications and conceptions that lend themselves to philosophical as well as religious interpretation. Did the last Gospel writer realize this need

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and then supply it near the close of the first Christian century?

In this view of the Gospel of John we do not claim absolute originality, though no work has yet appeared in which it is fully stated or definitely developed. Here and there in the rich literature of the subject we find isolated statements like the following, which may help to elucidate and support our general idea.

Luther called the Gospel of John, "the child's Gospel," and "the one, true, tender, main Gospel," supplemental sayings that express his profound knowledge and appreciation. Dr. Henry Van Dyke characterizes it as "this Gospel of a Person," thus fixing his thought upon the great, central agent. Clement of Alexandria points out that John made "a spiritual Gospel," so much needed by men and not fully furnished by the Synoptists. The meeting place of God and man is no longer behind temple curtains, but in the mind and heart that welcomes the Christ in sincere obedience.

Kaufman calls the author, "the Plato of the inspired circle," while another writer expresses his opinion of his work in these words, "The work is a philosophical one, the result of reflection on the character and words of Jesus." With his accustomed insight and happy expression, Godet says, "It was he who bequeathed to the world in his three works his threefold picture of the life in God; in the person of Christ (the Gospel); in the Christian (the Epistles); in the Church (the Apocalypse)." The Rev. Clark S. Beardslee says of John: "This

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man who pens this fourth account takes from these common actions a chosen few and thinks of them and grows into them and gets the weight of them and sees their size and penetrates to their philosophy. . . . Here is a disciple who saw the Savior's philosophy of things."

Shall we not assert as a result of our own study that John's view is comprehensive like that of a philosopher; that the truth he sets forth is fundamental; that his system of thought is consistent; that he always represents Christ and never misrepresents Him? Shall we not consider that there must be a Christian philosophy if Christian truth is fundamental, as it claims to be? "This is another world since Christ came into it," said Horace Bushnell. His presence and his teaching profoundly affect the life and thought of men, and, as Paul well knew, every thought should be brought into subjection to Christ and every man should assuredly know that "in Him all things consist."

In like manner we may expect a consensus of opinion with reference to the great central theme of John's Gospel. An eminent writer declares that "the progressive revelation of Christ's glory—this is the central theme of the fourth Gospel." Another says: "The peculiarity of this fourth Gospel is that it is all center. There is nothing in it but the person of Christ; . . . the doctrine of the kingdom has been swallowed up in the person and presence of the King." From the pen of the Rev. Frederick Palmer, this quotation: "If we had possessed no more than the first three Gospels, we

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should have had a wonderful Christ, an example and an inspiration. But He would be a historic being only; we should have had no warrant for identifying Him with the divine life of souls, dwelling with us and abiding in us. But the Christ of the fourth Gospel is the connecting link between the outward and the inward, between the historical and the spiritual."

The real subject of our study, then, is a Person to Whom we stand related in our thought life, our emotional life, our volitional life, and not merely by the accidents of individual existence. We, too, are invited into the realm of personal life in response to His appeal by means of those immediate relations that mark them as divine, and which should therefore be respected as supreme. As we are personally interested in this great Teacher, we are concerned with His philosophy, which offers form and substance to our thinking and thus aids in molding our character, shaping our career, and determining our destiny.

If we have rightly estimated our task, we may proceed in the spirit of the scholar who wants to know accurately and profoundly, who desires knowledge that can be organized in a rational system. We may proceed in the spirit of the Christian who accepts Christ for all He is, both human and divine, who regards Him as the Son of man and the Son of God. We may proceed, step by step, with a rising desire to know God as He is revealed in Christ and by the Holy Spirit, whatever the effect may be upon our thinking, our theory of life, our

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character, our personality, and our final future. As we advance reverently and yet courageously we may well maintain the attitude of faith and thus welcome the sweet influence and the saving power of the Gospel with an ever increasing assurance that both will be as beneficent as the One from Whom they emanate—Who is the soul and center of revelation and Who offers Himself to each of us as the soul and center of an otherwise imperfect personality.

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# PART I

## Doctrinal and Historic Basis



## CHAPTER I.

### THE SELF-REVEALING GOD.

The initial sentence of the Gospel of John presents to our minds the divine being and conveys a definite idea of the divine life. "In the beginning," before creation, God existed in the perfection of His own conscious life, and His independent and absolute existence becomes the best possible starting point in our attempt to understand His manifestation in the world and His presence in human history. The Word is the revealer of God, Whose existence is asserted and not assumed or proved, for men must assuredly know that there is a God to be revealed. They may be able to discover God in nature and in human history, but they should know Him also in His independent existence in order to appreciate His essential deity. The Being whom John calls God is not merely a relative, but also an absolute existence. No other being appears beyond Him, as no other rises above Him, and so He stands alone and supreme in the beginning to which John here points his readers.

Closely wrapped in his first sentence, yet clearly traceable therein, are the three essential elements of John's conception of God: First, His self-existence, which always characterizes Deity; second, His divine personality with its corresponding life; and third, His power of self-revelation, which issues in

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the incarnation. In his plan of presentation, his conception of God is necessarily primary, having the place and function of a logical premise. He begins with being and then proceeds to show its various manifestations by which its nature is disclosed. Hence, a right conception of God, in Himself, His personal life, and His self-manifestation through the Word, lays the best possible foundation for consistent thought all the way through his Gospel, while an imperfect or false idea at the beginning would vitiate his whole doctrinal system. He thus avoids this prolific source of error in so much of the religious thought of the race.

The three elemental ideas in his conception of God are fruitful throughout his Gospel, but John naturally emphasizes the second and third, personality and self-revelation. John wishes his readers to see God beyond and outside of history before they see Him in history, but in both views, God is essentially the same. In the Old Testament the first elemental idea had been emphasized, while in the New Testament the other two appear with greater prominence. In his doctrine of the Word, we find a clear conception of personality and the manifest purpose of self-revelation. God will make Himself known to men in a perfectly comprehensible manner and in perfect consistency with His own absolute being.

His first statement, therefore, introduces a Divine Person, Whom John names "the Word," describes as the associate of God, and then identifies with God so closely as to express his thought in the positive

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assertion, "the Word was God." This identification, however, does not in any way interfere with the real association of the Word with God, as he immediately makes plain, "The same was in the beginning with God." The Word is further described as being causally related to the world and actively interested in men, their being and life, present and future, so that the whole Gospel may be considered a development of this idea. But to lift men morally, to liberate them spiritually, to reconstitute and perfect human personality, a lifting power equal to the task must be enlisted, a constituted and perfected Personality as the actual beginning and the true center of divine life among men. Presenting this constituted and constituting center at the very opening of his book, John proceeds with the development as confident of his conclusions as he is free in his mental movements.

If John begins his teaching on a high table-land of thought, let us observe, as we proceed, that he maintains it to the end. He never loses sight of the Divine Person he seeks to declare to us, and the one way that seems to lie open before him is the direct path that brings him face to face with the Divine. His method of approach is neither impossible to him nor to us, but the most simple and effective, and therefore the one he adopts and recommends. The knowledge of God conveys to the mind and heart a sense of its directness, however circuitous its channels or numerous its connecting links, just as God's relation to the world is immediate and causal. New Testament writers, like the

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writers of the Old Testament, think of God as a Person, and hence the knowledge of Him must be conveyed by direct communication, whether by personal presence, the word addressed to the ear, the vision presented to the eye, or the dream in which the mind receives facts and impressions that are accepted as true. The initial doctrine of the Gospel of John simply meets the conditions of the case by presenting God as revealed in the Word, before Whom man is brought face to face.

The singular brevity of the introductory sentences of the Gospel of John in no wise interfered with the clearness or the expression of the author's thought. The initial conception is perfectly defined and capable of statement in written form. He sets before us a conception that has evidently been divinely communicated to him and intuitively apprehended by him. It is not the product of investigation or repeated observations. No course of reasoning and no exercise of imagination could compass the barest outlines of the Word, as the Word is clearly conceived in his thought and as clearly defined and described in these three introductory sentences. Yet his conception has become his own, a practical working idea, being real knowledge of a real fact.

John directs our attention to the Word as the initial being in the cosmic order. His first fact is mind, and mind in the definite form of personality. He subsequently concerns himself with matter and by necessary implication its laws also, as subordinate conceptions emerging in their natural order and falling into their logical place. He omits nothing

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from the system of things, but bases the whole created order upon being of the personal kind.

The Word stands forth independent of the cosmic order. He does not exist through creation, but creation exists through Him. He does not come to consciousness in creation. When He enters into cosmic relations He enters as the expression of mind. He is the Word. He is the manifestation of a mind that posits the Word in all His meaning, extensive and intensive. Yet the Word evidently exists in His own right and on His own account as a rational being, with the power of action and expression, the power to represent Another, and hence the power of a true selfhood on the plane of being and life of the One He adequately represents.

The second teaching concerning the Word, that He is the associate of God, is true beyond the rim of the cosmic order. It precedes creation and in no wise depends upon it. It was not realized in and through creation for the first time, but finds its place among the beginnings that are not to be otherwise accounted for or explained. It must be accepted as the fellowship of moral and spiritual life. Before the stars first sang together, a deeper note of harmony had sounded in the divine nature, "the Word was with God," a harmony that is characteristic and essential in holy life and holy being.

As a third mark, John asserts the deity of the Word, "He was God," from a beginning which antedates the cosmic order. His deity is not represented as an attainment, but appears as an original right and reality of His nature. This great, fundamental

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truth completes John's conception of this initial being. His thought is rounded out as a rational whole within him, while before him stands this divine Person Whom he discovers at the very beginning of the cosmic order and subsequently finds at the very basis of it. God is the only satisfactory explanation of creation or of being. The Word was God and is God by a real oneness of being and life, a real identity of mental aim and action, of moral principle and purpose, of personal preference and promise. Such is the thought of John, as stated and implied, and no element of his conception can be lost or obscured without sinking below the level of his Gospel in its subsequent development.

In his second sentence, the mind of John seems to cling to what he has said in preparation for what is to follow. The Word is the associate of God in the initiation of the cosmic order, which in no way disturbs this fundamental relation of being and life. God is not lost in creation nor does He stand apart from it. He remains in relation to it while He is superior to it. Nor does this relation of the Word to the world in any way interfere with His association with God, but rather affords an opportunity to reveal it where it were otherwise unknown. John feels no need of changing or even modifying his original conception of the Word. On the other hand, he gathers it into a usable unity of thought and expression when he says, "The same was in the beginning with God." There is more to be said about Him, but what has been said conveys a def-



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inite knowledge that must not be lost or vacated by our minds as we proceed.

John's third sentence affirms that all things were made by the Word, by His wisdom, His power, His agency, and by Him alone. The making is not simply shaping or forming, but originating also and constituting under natural law. Material existence with all its forces and laws are viewed as the product of His creative power, and hence are entirely dependent upon Him, first for their initial existence and then for their continued existence, though time is scarcely a factor in these conceptions that preface the fourth Gospel. The modern scientist demands great stretches of time for creation, while the apostle relies solely upon God.

Like God, the Word, or the Christ, as we are subsequently taught to call Him, has no past or present or future such as condition merely cosmic beings. His is primarily unconditioned existence, intelligent, free, absolute. If He enters into cosmic relations He enters of His own impulse and will. With reference to the world, the Word is creative; with reference to man, redemptive, as subsequently appears; with reference to God, revealer, associate, and even equal. His personality occupies the plane of Deity. His being is not conditioned from without, but only from within, as all true personality must be. As we never ask what God's past has been or what His future will be, so we find it no more fitting to ask concerning the future of the Christ, unless we limit our thought to His human nature. His deity bears all the marks of deity. He is the same yesterday,

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to-day, and forever. Even His humanity has been uplifted and re-enforced by His divine attributes without the loss of His human nature, suggesting a life for man that is less and less conditioned from without.

Since the Christian is related to the Christ in a most real and most personal way, why should he not be less and less anxious about his own future? His present should assume supreme importance in so far as time concerns him. "This is the work of God that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent." This one supreme relation, timeless in itself if not in its realization, gathers up in itself all the life of man, all his being, all his normal development, all his past, present, and future, so that these time measures and conditions actually mean less to him as his relation to God means more.

The Johannine conception of the Word is that of an uncreated being, rational, moral, divine in nature and method of life, Who fills out the category of personality, Who creates the material universe, Who enters human history in order to reveal God in His own person and by His redemptive work.

No dualism finds place in the first chapter of our Gospel, not even in covert implication, subsequently to be developed or eliminated, just as none appears in the first chapter of Genesis, where we are told of the beginning of the material world. God is first and central in the thought of John, who never needs to make corrections, emendations, and modifications as he proceeds to unfold his doctrine. His consistency throughout his Gospel points to the

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fact that his mind holds no irrational or contradictory conceptions.

We can speak of the Word as a causal agent, using metaphysical terms, without violence to John's conception. The selfhood of the Word is asserted, after which His life in association with God is declared, and finally His actual deity. He could not be the associate of God in any true sense without essential selfhood and true divinity. His self-existence finds its completion in His life of association, and His associational existence ministers to His self-life. In short, He is deity and not merely divine, a point on which the apostle shows no lapse of thought and no lameness of conclusion. The association of the Word with God is real and fulfills all the conditions, intelligent interest in the plans of God, and sympathetic devotion to the purposes of God. To be still more specific on a point that should be beyond question, we should weigh the statement, "The Word was God." He is divine, not as a matter of pre-eminence or as the result of attainment, but because of His own essential nature. In no sense is He a product of earth, but bursts upon our view in the perfection of His personality and the full possession of His powers.

The association of the Word with God is carried back to the very beginning in the second statement, which repeats what was previously said with the emphasis on the eternal existence of the Word. He is not a created being, but self-existent, and hence the eternal associate of God. As Rev. James Lee Mitchell has said, "John deals not with Adam,

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refers not to Abraham, takes no pains to strengthen his position with prophecies in time, passes by creation as though it were an event of yesterday, penetrates the eternal past, and shows us Jesus as one with the Infinite Father."

From this point of view we appreciate more fully the statement that the Word is the active agent and the sole agent in the creation of all things. In Revelation 3:14, He is called "the beginning of the creation of God," in connection with "the Amen" or closing of this present order, and also "the faithful and true witness," apparently descriptive of His character and work in the intervening period of time. As Creator, we cannot think of Him as a blind, impersonal agent, but intelligent, powerful, benevolent, and all that world-construction rationally requires. He is the Word in creation and in some sense in prophecy, but more perfectly in redemption. In creation God speaks directly. "He spake and it was done, He commanded and it stood fast"; in prophecy He addressed men through His representative to whom "the word of the Lord came"; in redemption He manifests Himself in the Person of Jesus Christ, Who esteemed Himself as one sent by God. As John's conception accords with Old Testament teaching, and as Jewish teachers in the time of Christ used "the Word of the Lord" to designate the manifested Jehovah, it is reasonable to believe that it was derived from the Old Testament rather than from Philo, of whom Professor Purves says: "His Logos was the divine Reason and only obtained existence objective to God for the

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purpose of creation. It cannot be regarded as really personal though certainly personified." According to Rev. Henry M. King, "Philo's teaching was the higher criticism of that day, an attempt to reduce revelation to a philosophic basis by the hypothesis of a Logos, personal or impersonal, Philo seemed to be uncertain which, the embodiment of all divine power and wisdom—a doctrine that was the fruitful germ of all the gnostic speculations of the second and third centuries."

Closely related to the knowledge of the Word as the Creator of all things, is the knowledge of the Word as the Source of all life, especially the life that is the light of men, the highest form of life in the created world. Here, at least, every man should feel and know the creative touch of God. In his intellectual life, his moral life, his spiritual life, God has distinguished him from the rest of creation and constituted him man, a divine birthright that should fully attest his parentage. The process of his creation bears no resemblance to evolution, on the mental side, at least. Life is in the Word, and when it is communicated to man as his original constitution and endowment, it is called light, for creation is not a mere transfer from God to man, but rather a transformation of the divine gift of life into the light of a human spirit, reproducing in man the image of God. Thus the light within finds an answering light without. The Word shines as the light and continues to be the life and light of men, as the devout heart in every age has found and as

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history has shown in every revival of religion that has marked its course.

The light meets its negation, the darkness, and while the light always remains light and always shines according to its own nature and intensity, the darkness is non-receptive, apprehending it not, or, if we prefer the marginal reading, demonstrates its inferiority in that it overcomes it not. The light penetrates the darkness but is never lost or really dispelled by the resistance it meets. Its rays are universally distributed and it reaches real results, if nothing more than its own rejection, which is the confirmation of the darkened mind in its depraved state. The divine light forever proceeds from its Source, revealing moral darkness wherever it exists, refreshing moral light with its superior rays and pointing back to the divine life as the real source of light in the human spirit. The light of God enters man in the form of life from God.

Life occupies so large a place in the created world that it requires special consideration both as to its origin and its nature. So great a fact cannot be left without explanation. As it appears in the cosmic order we note that it is directly related to the Being Who produced that order. "In Him was life," we are told, life in general, all life, life of every kind, from the lowest plant to the highest spiritual being. To know life scientifically and satisfactorily, we must know its source, which is the divine Word. Hence, as regards its origin and its varied forms, life finds its complete explanation in the creative agency of God.

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It is neither religious nor rational to refer life to natural agencies and material forces. Life is essentially a new thing which is not reducible to something else. Mechanical force cannot produce it, and chemical combinations cannot explain it, though life operates like a capable chemist and a master mechanic. It organizes materials, but is not the product of organization. It is an agent of another order, and hence we may regard it as another evidence of the deity of the Word, or we may look upon it as a greater fact than matter, to be studied in its origin, its nature, and its development. Matter comes into existence by the creative act of God, while life has its source and origin in God. Life has a divine origin and partakes of the divine nature.

When the scientist says that all life comes from the egg, he is not looking for its ultimate source, and has not stood with John at the outer rim of the cosmic order. He speaks of life within limits and as he sees it under the microscope. To him it is a fact of its own kind which, as a scientist, he cannot explain to his own satisfaction. No combination of chemical elements fully accounts for its existence or its processes. He must lift his eyes above matter in order to discover the ultimate origin of life or really to appreciate its nature. The scientist may stand beside the apostle just as the apostle may stand beside the scientist, and both may see life in the world and in the Word, in the divine Mind, in the benevolent wisdom and power and purpose of this divine Person. Such a view of life is

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at least rational, and certainly more scientific than loosely to describe it as an evolution of natural forces, however long the process and imperceptible the changes.

The life of God is always the light of men. Revelation always meets man's highest reason and then forever transcends it. Each new point of contact, each new conception of being, makes its appeal to reason as well as to conscience and suffices for the perfect satisfaction of both. The scientist cannot afford to forget that he is a logician and a man, and therefore a religious being to whom revelation makes its appeal. The author of the fourth Gospel knows facts that concern the scientist because he knows revelation as the supreme reason and the all-inclusive knowledge.

All agree that the highest type of life in the cosmic order appears in man, the highest type of physical life, and above all, the intellectual, moral, and spiritual life that distinguishes man. The life was the light of men, the illuminating life, the immaterial life, the fundamental principle of man's being. Life of this kind, life that is light, not natural but spiritual, has its original source in the divine Word. It arises in the divine and should be kept on its own level. Men should know its source that they may know its nature, its contrast, the darkness, and its divine development.

The darkness is inferior as compared with the light and the life as both proceed from the Word. Men are tempted to believe that evil is greater than good. They often delude themselves with the



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thought that the good man knows not the evil, while the evil man knows both good and evil. The good man knows evil well enough to reject it, while the evil man cannot know the good in its essential nature or follow it out to its completion. Plato affirms that vice cannot know virtue, too, but a virtuous nature, educated by time, will acquire a knowledge both of virtue and of vice. The Rev. J. Ritchie Smith says, "Spiritual truth is not known till it is obeyed," and thus the angel of God still guards the entrance to Paradise.

The immaterial light of mind and spirit shines into other minds and hearts with a pervasive radiance that reflects intelligent being, or shall we say transports one personal being to the very doorstep of another with an instinctive appeal for a worthy welcome. How natural for spirit to answer to spirit if both find the origin of their life in the Word! How readily both bow before God in recognition of their supreme relationship to Him! What a basis for prayer as a relief from mental, moral, and spiritual want, and especially as a welcome liberation from the loneliness of the human spirit! Light, the material agent, finds its way to the confines of creation, and light, the immaterial agent, ascends to God in the twinkling of an eye. Light answers to light, and spirit to spirit. How near, how illuminating, how vitalizing must God become to any man who has received the divine life according to his measure and who opens his whole being to the light which perpetually radiates from the divine Personality!

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We know life as a fact in our own spirits immediately, and why may we not know it as renewed and sustained directly by God? If we cannot define it satisfactorily, we may yet know it truly, its origin, its nature, its development. We can know it as the thing that distinguishes us, that enables us to shine with the light of life, that relates us to other spiritual beings, that enables us to fill out God's thought of us when He says, the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord.

Can we see the unity of John's universe amid its diversity, matter, natural law, natural life, spiritual life, all coming directly from the one Source? John begins with a divine Person Who creates matter, establishes law, confers life. He then ushers us into human history by means of a particular man who is sent by God to bear witness concerning the light. The thread of unity shows more plainly as he proceeds to develop the direct personal agency which is as apparent in the Gospel as it is essential in the life of men.

After the initial Being is conceived in terms of balanced personality beyond the confines of the material universe; after material things are made and held in harmony under natural law; after life is known as a new fact, which is explained by means of its origin; a divinely-appointed man appears suddenly like a glowing meteor in a star-lit sky. "There came a man sent from God whose name was John." This one man is singled out and called upon to stand alone in the world and in history, and so also in the thought of each individual, though he

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is related to all history and all the world. Back to God we are borne once more, for this man is directly and personally related to the initial Being. He enters upon the scene of life and action to fulfill a specific work as God's representative among men.

He is sent by God and even named by Him, as Luke tells us. Unlike other men in his ascetic habit and moral temper, he is yet no moral freak or religious enthusiast, but a chosen witness of the Divine, above and beyond the cosmic order, in history also, and especially in the human heart, which becomes the realm of divine life through repentance and faith. He bears witness concerning the light which is the highest form of life in the soul. This is the true light which we see in its perfection in the Word, the light that lighteth every man who comes into the world.

John's special mission is the cultivation of faith in men in order that they may claim as their own the divine life and enjoy the true light. Men should know God not only as Creator, not only as a logical implication of thought, but individually and personally. Every man must be singled out before God. A new day has dawned and a brighter one than the world has ever seen before. John is not the light, but only a witness to declare Him, so that every man may know the One Who already illuminates each soul and Who offers to each a higher potency of life and light. Every man is open to God in his soul-life, but many men are only half-conscious of this fact; they fail to know with practical certainty the

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divine source of their own being; they even fail to know Him Who is in the world, Who created the world, and Who is always unknown to men of the world. This agnosticism of unbelief may even possess those who profess to know God. He came unto His own and they that were His own received Him not. They forfeited their privilege of welcoming Him into their own lives, the visible Church, Jewish history, and all history. But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become the children of God. His gift reflects Himself. Such is the fruit of faith in Christ and the glory of the new day that has dawned.

The believer is a new and better type of man, born into a new life and a new world by means of a birth that is not physical, but spiritual, not the result of human will and agency, but the product of the direct action of the will of God. The cause assigned is equal to the effect, and religion keeps company with reason. Thus, and thus only, could a man enter into this new and personal relation to God and really become a newly-constituted and newly-organized being in whom the will of God is central and supreme. Thus, any man can come into this direct personal relation to God. Thus every man is called upon to actualize this relation in order to realize his best life. Otherwise, his life must be mechanical and deistic, and only thus can it become personal and theistic. The believer comes to God not through the testimony of nature or moral law, but through the Christ to Whom God's representative man bears his personal testimony. The be-

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liever may, in turn, become one of God's representatives, sent by Him and standing next to Him, having a disposition to obey Him and a purpose to represent Him truly; and so the making of a believer is the making of a man who knows God in Christ by direct knowledge and personal experience.

John, the individual man, the particular person, divinely chosen and divinely sent, becomes God's representative, who testifies of the divine light and life, not as a thing, but as a truth of personal quality and content. The man and his message occupy the personal plane in making known the divine Word to beings who may rise to this same level of life. John is a religious leader and not a mere formalist, a man sent by God to represent Him, a man who announces the coming Christ, a man who invites all men to know God in a personal way.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE INCARNATE WORD.

Human agency is associated with the divine when God enters human history in the Person of Jesus Christ. The man who announces the coming of Christ has been so well disciplined in spiritual life that he in no way obscures our view of Him by obtrusive self-exaltation. He freely declares that he is not the light, but only God's witness to the Light, for he well knows men have often lost sight of God when they have fixed their eyes upon His messengers. The false teacher, willing to exalt himself, waits for the plaudits of the people, and this one mark serves to distinguish him in all ages. If God is to manifest Himself among men as a Person, He should be announced by a person, that men, as persons, may welcome Him. Thus the mind of the apostle moves freely on this high table-land of personal life and reaches conclusions which on one side appear to be the outcome of constructive reasoning, and on the other, the result of direct revelation.

The door of entrance into human history stands wide open before the Christ, since the true light reaches every man as a universal fact and a universal truth. Every man is an object of that light which continues to shine upon him. Moreover, the true Light is distinguishable from all other real or pretended lights by Its origin, Its nature, and Its

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universality. All men are adapted to the true light, and this light is adapted to all men, and hence a direct relation already exists between the Christ and all men.

The divine dealing with the world can be expressed only in terms of personality, for the Word was in the world as its life and light from the dawn of creation, and yet the world of men failed to know Him as a person. Even His own chosen people became so enamored of the external forms of their religion that they failed to recognize Him when He came to them in His true character and in visible form. They attributed to Him another character unlike His own, and thus He was unwelcome to them. To them He was not divine and not God. But to others who were not bound by tradition and religious forms and ecclesiasticism, and who received Him in His rightful character, to them He gave the right to become the children of God. His deity could not be suppressed in the world among men. There is a divine result accruing to those who receive Him for what He really is, and thus opening the way to accept Him for all He can be to them. The human will touches the divine will, and the divine will touches the human will, and God appears in human life and in human history, not as their contradiction, but their completion, not alone because sin had entered both, but because God had promised to enter both even before the foundation of the world, not as an incident and afterthought, but as a divine purpose as deep as life itself.

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“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.” The associate of God became the associate of men. If He belonged in the divine nature, He belonged also in human nature; if He is the perfection of deity, He is also the perfection of humanity; if He becomes visible to men and mingles with them, it is as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Human eyes behold Him and distinguish His glory, veiled and subdued, but still the glory of God.

The doctrine of the Word which is so essential to the proper understanding of the fourth Gospel may be gathered up in terms that reflect the Gospel record. It is the doctrine of a divine Person, Who is pre-existent, Who is the associate of God, Who is God in His very nature and being and method of life, Who is the agent of creation and the source of life and light, Who enters into the world and human history announced by a man whom God sent to perform this task and to prepare men for His coming by an appeal to their conscience and their religious sense, Who assumes human form and accepts human associates that He may be to them the channel of grace and truth. God's law could be given by Moses and written on stone, but God's grace and truth cannot be separated from God Himself, and hence their only channel of entrance into human life and human history is through Jesus Christ. Such is the apostle's doctrine of the Word.



## The Incarnate Word

The incarnation of the Word is stated as a historic fact. Great as this fact must be, John has comprehended it, and places upon it its true value. History inspires his faith and shapes his philosophy, and not the reverse. The history he writes and the truth he teaches have had their proper effect on his own mind.

The incarnation is a distinctly Christian conception that is fundamental in gospel teaching and religious thought. The Word enters a human body in association with a human spirit and thus lives a human life, if we may so speak, in order to actualize the human type and ideal, the only possible way to fill out in its perfection the divine thought of human life and character and personality. No angel could become a man, and man had failed under favorable conditions, and after he had yielded to evil and suffered from disobedience he could not rise to God's perfect thought or even make progress in that direction without a new increment of moral energy and a new incentive to moral effort. This new impulse and accession of spiritual power for the individual and for the race God freely affords in the incarnation of the Word. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us," became flesh by both a natural and a supernatural process, entering the world by the channels of the race, yet so that God alone is His Father. John writes, no doubt, with complete knowledge of the virgin birth and also with as complete acceptance of the historic fact, though to him the really significant thing is Deity in the form

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of humanity, or humanity associated with Deity in a single life and personality.

The Word becomes flesh in order to live a real human life; in order to be visible to the eyes of men; in order to answer their questions and teach them the truth in the only way it can be taught; in order to complete and perfect His relation to mankind, accentuating it on one side by the specific bond that is wholly human and on the other wholly divine, while it is personal on both sides, and thus from both, the Word marks out the grand result of human redemption. In short, the Word becomes flesh in order to become an organic part of human life and human history. The race requires a moral head as well as the individual. As man, Jesus represents man, for man requires a representative before God, and also an example for the race, and especially for the individual. If the unity of the individual is ever achieved, if the unity of the multitude, the nation, and the race, if atonement for man is ever made before God, how can these ends be attained except through a human personality as its instrument and then as its pledge and promise? Even in His human form, the Word abides, being full of grace and truth. He loses none of His divine attributes by becoming man. He is the Word still, not being conditioned from without, the same divine Person Who appears beyond the cosmic order and Who now enters human life to the end that men may enter the divine life.

## The Incarnate Word

John simply seeks to convey to other minds his knowledge of the Word, a knowledge which came to him by direct revelation, communicating to him what he could not otherwise know, by spiritual endowment enlightening and uplifting his natural powers, and by personal contact with Jesus during those three wonderful years of divine instruction, followed by many years of testimony and meditation. He masters his theme and measures his doctrine with an ease and confidence that convince us without additional argument that he is aided by the Spirit at every point. We are impressed by the originality of his conceptions, the accuracy of his statements, and the symmetry of his system of thought, all of which are plainly implied if not plainly stated. In the luminous language of the Rev. Henry M. King: "John, guided by the divine Spirit, declared Christ to be the true, living, personal Logos, possessor of creative power and infinite wisdom, God and Savior in one person, God manifest in the flesh. . . . He gathered up all that was true in revelation and all that was highest and best in philosophy and centered it in Christ, the Son of God, the divine Logos."

John seems to have had no doubt or question with reference to the humanity of Christ. It required no proof other than His bodily presence. Nor does the incarnation bring with it any perplexing question as to the union of the two natures in the one Personality. He had asked how, and wondered why, but his questions were all answered when he fully apprehended the deity of Christ and yet found

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no reason for surrendering His humanity. Here he discovered the moral union, the harmony of God and man, the atonement in essence and anticipation. John constructs no theory of gradual impartation, as if to assist God in entering the low portals of human life or to aid man to accept a historic fact that burdens rationalistic thought. He looks upon the incarnate Word as an ultimate fact, and hence he never attempts to explain the incarnation and never doubts its reality. Here he touches a basal truth and on this he rests secure. He records a great historic fact and states a great Christian doctrine in a single sentence, "the Word became flesh."

Perhaps we have been impressed with the idea of being and the idea of becoming, which we find in the first chapter of the fourth Gospel. John begins with being, but he finds room for becoming. One of the most wonderful things about a man is his power to become. Those who received the true light, to them He gave the right to become children of God, a definite and well-grounded advance. The Word became flesh, something more than He was. "He that cometh after me," says John, the witness, "is become before me." He transcends His human forerunner. Thus being is not fixed in eternal, unchangeable existence, but by an internal process attains to a new life with new relations and new reality. This process may be more easily understood with respect to man than in the case of the Word, though God is never outdone by any of His creatures. It is the divine becoming which is so distinctly asserted that costs us the most earnest

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thought. How can the infinite God become a finite man? How can a self-existent being still become what He was not before?

"And the Word became flesh," we are told, a continuation of what has gone before concerning man's becoming, a complementary truth, another fact of the same kind, and without which the first were impossible. God always leads the way into spiritual life and spiritual liberty. Human nature ought always to be plastic to His touch and responsive to His will. Men may discover God just behind matter and law and life and His personal representatives, and no man can get very far away from Him without a deliberate perversion of his own nature. The poetic prayer, "Nearer, my God, to Thee," has been anticipated by the divine approach in the only begotten Son, Who dwells next to every man in a real humanity of His own.

John finds ample room for a real humanity and a real deity when the Word becomes flesh. The divine glory is not extinguished nor the human nature destroyed, but both shine in separate and united perfection. The deity of the Word as previously declared, continues, while this new manifestation calls forth a new name, "the Only Begotten from the Father," and also a new conception of His character and a new appreciation of His work. His divine Sonship is immediately linked with His divine leadership among men. Moses represented the law, while Jesus Christ represents the dispensation of grace and truth. Christ is the one great leader of humanity, without associate or successor.

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He became flesh, entering the lower life of man as well as his higher life. He respects the mysterious unity of human nature, body and spirit. He is a genuine human being from its lowest limits to its highest levels, in its reality and in its totality. He fulfills, but never destroys, human nature. Likewise His deity is as real as His humanity. He becomes man by an interior process of life that is positive and permanent in its nature and results. His deity is not degraded or even limited by His humanity save as it is thus limited according to His own benevolent purpose and holy will. The apostle John finds no contradiction of deity in humanity except as men have created it. Human nature opens to God like any other part of creation.

The Apostle John never plays with words as the symbols of ideas, but always uses them to convey a knowledge of realities. He never loses being in its further becoming. Final facts and fundamental principles concern him, and when he sees the Word becoming man he sees also that He is the Son of God. John, the witness, beholds the deity of the Word enshrined in His humanity. He measures the One he precedes and proclaims by the standard of his own humanity and acknowledges the evident superiority of the divine man—a superiority not alone of degree, but also of kind and content. He was before me and so He towers above me. He comes after me and outmeasures me there. His fullness ministers to all men, myself among them, and grace for grace, not a line of beauty anywhere but attests his touch. The law given on Sinai for

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the moral regulation of men was given by Moses and inscribed on tablets of stone, but grace and truth, those personal principles and qualities, the very essentials of moral being and becoming, these are ministered to men by Jesus Christ. The moral law knows no limit to its authority, and in like manner grace and truth make their divine appeal wherever there are moral beings to answer to it.

The Word became flesh, and henceforth the only begotten Son reveals God to men. No man has developed his religious nature and his spiritual vision sufficiently to enable him to see God and comprehend Him. As a personal being, God is invisible to man, and hence revelation in Christ is an absolute necessity. The human eye cannot see God, Who is a spirit, and the human intellect cannot conceive Him or construct Him like a character in fiction. Hence, God manifests Himself to men in the Person of the Son, Who assumes human nature and dwells among men. His relation of personal intimacy with the Father continues, while the contrasts in his life never become contradictions, but only serve to accentuate the higher nature by means of the lower, and to lead us to the apostolic conclusion that the invisible God becomes visible as we behold His glory in the Person of Jesus Christ.

The fourth Gospel begins its record of revelation as rational on both sides, as knowledge conveyed and as knowledge received, as truth made known in terms of human thinking and as truth apprehended by the human mind, as God revealed in the incarnate Word and God received in the humanity of

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Jesus Christ. Nothing unphilosophical or unscientific or irrational regarding realities and relations, causes and effects, being and becoming, has greeted us, and we therefore conclude that the fourth Gospel lays a secure foundation for the redemption of man, his being and his becoming, intellectual, moral, and personal, created in the image of God and capable of a development that continually calls for the humanity and the divinity of the incarnate Word.

As the creator of the world and as the source of life, especially the higher life of man, rational, moral, and spiritual, the Word bears upon His breast the moral responsibility therein implied. Revelation is no mere incident in history, and the incarnation no mere accident and afterthought, but both are central, both enter into the very nature of the case, both rest upon the eternal purpose of a being Who is morally constituted and who needs no law to recall or re-enforce moral obligation.

John's thought of God is no weak accommodation of deity to humanity on the one side, nor on the other an unwarranted exaltation of humanity to the rank and estate of deity. His God is God in deed and in truth, and his man is truly man. He knows both as objective beings and as constructed in his own thinking. To him man is a created being, a moral, intellectual, and spiritual being, a true selfhood, a person with the moral responsibility of a person, and with the prospect and opportunity for continued personal development. To him, God is a self-existent being Whose interior life reveals the



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Word in personal form and fellowship, Who is the creator of the world, Who enters into human life and human history, Who comes to men as the only begotten Son, Whose Sonship reflects the Fatherhood of God, and Whose Person presents to men once for all the absolute Personality of God. No man hath seen God at any time, and hence the necessity of divine self-revelation. He is not subject to discovery, like a continent or a chemical element. Men see the works of God on every hand, but the Person of Deity, the gentleness linked with power, the love joined with justice, the mercy that pities and the heart that forgives, how could these be known unless the only begotten Son, Who embodies them all, comes to make them manifest? And who, aside from Him, could undertake the task?

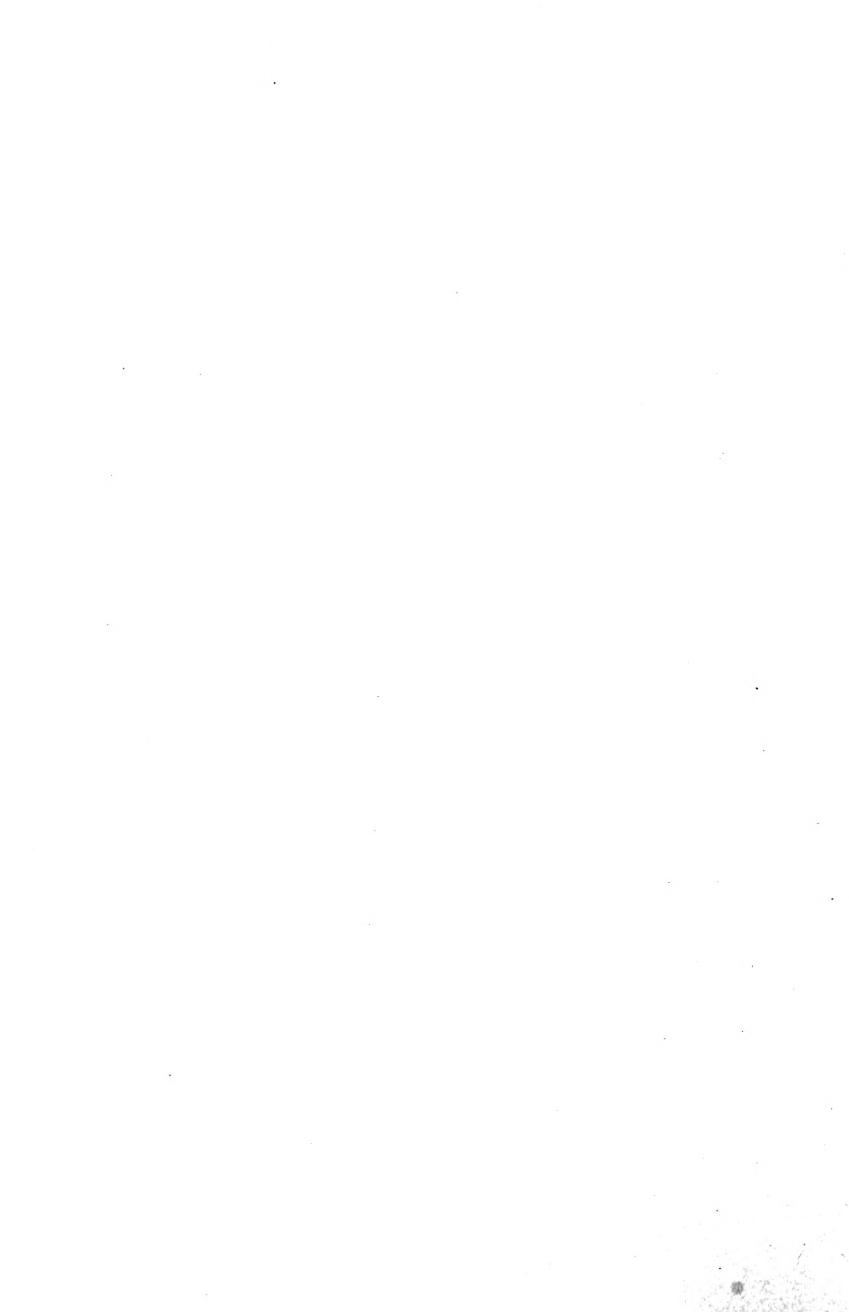
The apostle evidently regards the Word, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son, as one and the same Person. God and man are united in Him, so that his deity and his humanity are organically related and therefore inseparable. This union knows no dissolution, but forever abides as the secure basis of human hope and human happiness. Religion, then, is the human person realizing by faith his relation to this divine Person. The living man and the whole man is required to fulfill the religious relation on the human side, for it takes the Person of Christ to reveal God to a single soul. It takes man as a person to receive God, and it would surely be presumptuous to think otherwise. As a Person, God reveals Himself, and in like manner man must respond to Him or never know the essential nature or

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revelation, never rise to the plane of personal life of the Christian type.

The Word is dimly visible in creation, but He becomes clearly visible in Christ with human form and features. We see Him also in the Son in the relation of perfect obedience to the Father, Who owns and honors that obedience. This one divine Person is always the Son, always the Christ, always the Word, and never other or less than these. The thought of John never shrinks and shrivels like an autumn leaf, but keeps its freshness and its force because of its essential truth. His doctrine of the Word is the doctrine of a Person, divine in being and attributes and work, Who reveals God to man, thus enabling man to see God and also himself in his own personal life and possibilities, Who enters human history as an ideal, an example, a motive, a mediator, Who abides as a perpetual Presence among men and makes His perpetual appeal to them to welcome Him as the only begotten Son Who is in the bosom of the Father and claims a place in every human breast.

PART II  
The Promised Messiah



## CHAPTER III.

### JOHN, THE INSPIRED WITNESS.

The divine Word greets us at the very opening of John's Gospel and His human herald enters unannounced. Each appears without apology and with no other introduction than a plain statement of his character and work. Nothing seems to stand in the way of their coming and nothing hinders a clear account of each. Knowledge is not confused nor is description called upon to rescue it. The Word as here described and the man whom God has sent, stand in a real relation to each other. God comes close to man, not to compel him to withdraw, but, on the contrary, to invite him to come close to God according to his nature and his ability.

The Word comes first, and then John, the inspired witness. The self-revealing God must begin revelation as well as creation. His personal entrance into history, however, is anticipated by this one man who announces His presence among men and His public appearance at the beginning of His public ministry. John, the inspired witness, steps out of the ranks of the multitude and even out of the procession of traditional ecclesiasticism to meet the coming Christ with profound personal appreciation and appropriate official recognition.

We may wonder why this appointed witness appears so early in the first chapter. The record places him where, according to his life and ministry, he belongs. His knowledge of the Word fits him to

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be there. He knows the Word in His relative and also in His independent greatness. He knows His superiority as compared with Moses and the law. He knows His pre-existence and His pre-eminence. He knows Him as the promised Messiah and even as the Son of God in the higher sense, and all these things he needed to know before he could rightly represent Him or candidly meet the questions and doubts of men. His knowledge of the Word is beyond what we would expect at this stage of revelation, yet it was all necessary in order that he might really welcome Him and rightly introduce Him to men. The unreal is inadmissible in the Gospel, where nothing is said or done merely for effect, but where all things work together in fulfillment of the divine plan. The inspired witness and the divine Word are related in thought and life, and this relation empowers and directs the testimony of John.

The following subjects are considered in their order: John and the Word, John and the Jews, John and Jesus, John and his disciples, that group of earnest men who begin at once to gather about the new leader. If John knows the Word as divine, he knows the Word as incarnate. We should note that John has a right conception of Jesus from the very first and bore testimony to Him before he saw Him. He knew Who he was looking for and the one Person Who answered to his ideal. Hence his testimony broke forth in those ever-memorable words when the two met in public, official recognition, just the day after John had given an account of himself and his work to the Jerusalem Jews.

## John, the Inspired Witness

The doctrine of the Word prepares us as it did John, the witness, and John, the apostle, for all that follows in the fourth Gospel. With a true conception of God in His absolute life and in His relation to the world, we are prepared to proceed with that wonderful history that opens the door to all real religion and all true philosophy. The divine strand never fails or changes color, but the human thread comes more prominently into the field of vision. The inspired testimony of God's chosen witness is elaborated and its effects fully displayed as men are permitted to see God in history as He now appears in the Person of Jesus Christ.

Neither the apostle nor the witness evinces any fear with reference to the new Leader and the new religion. They raise no question as to the manner in which the divine Word should appear in human form and historic relations. They have no fear for the honor and dignity of the central Figure, but permit Him to step upon the common soil and cross the lowly threshold of peasant life in Palestine with none of the accessories of greatness. He is announced by John, the inspired witness, and permitted to win His way by the force of His own personality. We may wonder why He does not enlist existing agencies and organizations as the only possible way to reach the world and so to save it. Surely His task is too great for accomplishment without the aid of great men and great institutions. But if this be our thought, we are doomed to disappointment. Not masses, but individuals, not movements, but men, not organization, but appre-

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ciation, mark the first efforts of Jesus to win the world to Himself.

John reveals his character as a competent witness by his public preaching and his work of baptism. He gives himself to his task as though he thought it was worthy of his best and his all. No mere performance occupies his mind, but a cause to which he is committed by personal conviction, by public advocacy, and by a sacred ordinance. He is no echo, but a voice; a voice that proceeds from the center of his soul, a voice that proclaims an independent message fresh from God. He is a stern ascetic from the wilderness, a preacher of righteousness, a prophet, and more than a prophet. He is not a scribe nor a priest nor an ecclesiastic, yet he is God's chosen witness, a real man with a real mission, who died in the cause of truth and who lived to declare a Savior, Whose life and death brought salvation to all mankind.

No wonder his work awakened the interest of the people and even compelled the attention of the official leaders of Judaism. The new doctrine might conflict with the old order of worship and even the whole Jewish system. Was he advocating a new order and a new system? The question is too important to be neglected, and official representatives are sent to inquire from the man whom God had sent, "Who art thou?" For the first time the new religion and the old come face to face, the new in its ordinary course of expression and appeal, and the old in questioning and doubt and self-defense.



## John, the Inspired Witness

Must men ask John who he is? Can they have no opinion of their own? Is he not a religious teacher and leader who is true to the history and the spirit of Judaism? Who now announces the Messiah with the same assurance that characterizes the prophets of old? But every man ought to know himself better than any other man knows him, and be better able to define his duty and declare his doctrine. He is not the expected Christ, the first misconception likely to arise in that expectant age. Nor is he Elijah, the rugged Tishbite, though he breathes the same spirit, nor yet the prophet of whom Moses had spoken and whom they should know was none other than the promised Messiah. Not content with a negative answer, they ask for a positive statement of his character and work. His idea of himself has already been formulated: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said Isaiah the prophet." Himself a product of their religious history, his work is a fulfillment of their ancient prophecy. He prepares the way of the Lord by preaching righteousness and heralds His coming by public announcement. His message has more significance for men than his own personality, for a voice dies away while the message remains, having been transmitted to the minds and hearts of men.

How wonderfully this leader leads us into the unconventional and the unseen! How admirably he frees himself from the thralldom of tradition and walks out under the open sky of spiritual life and liberty! How confidently he points to the incarnate

## The Inner Witness of the Fourth Gospel

Word and bids us find God among men! Worthy forerunner of Him Who makes men free indeed! Worthy herald of the coming Christ! Worthy prophet of a glorious future that bears within it the personal presence of God!

The preaching and the baptism of John are alike corrective and constructive, the rebuke of sin and the enforcement of righteousness. He is a religious leader rather than a moral reformer, and adapts himself to prophecy and history. He prepares men for the coming of the Christ by restoring the thought of direct dealing with God, so often lost and obscured by the very means appointed to perpetuate it. Why baptizest thou, if thou art not the Christ nor Elijah, nor the prophet? This is the real question that calls forth the real answer to their inquiry. John knows the worth of his water baptism, which he performs with definite purpose and religious significance. His work is done in view of the One Who is already mingling with the people and to Whom, as his superior, John confesses that he is not worthy to render service of the most menial kind. His authority is derived. His baptism looks forward and not backward for its vindication. It is organically related to the immediate future and finds its explanation in the coming One, Whom John was sent to proclaim.

The sight of Jesus calls forth John's testimony which may seem to us like a fixed formula, but which was to him a fresh and living truth; a testimony that harmonized with the apostle's conception of the Word; a testimony that is both prophecy and ful-

## John, the Inspired Witness

fillment—fulfillment, for the Messiah is here pointed out by one who knows Him as such; prophecy, for it contemplates a racial redemption. A single sentence suffices to announce the Savior of the world, to characterize Him and to awaken hope in the human heart. "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world."

This man, sent by God to bear witness concerning the person and work of Jesus, experiences no hardship, and exhibits no hesitancy in testifying to His Messiahship. His expression is spontaneous, springing from a soul consecrated to its task, sublime in form and content, satisfactory to Jesus as true, and sufficient to arrest the attention of every one who hears the inspired announcement. John sees in Jesus, "the Lamb of God," an expressive symbol to the Jewish mind, accustomed to regard the sacrifice as the essential element in religion—"that taketh away the sin of the world," an explanation for Jew and Gentile alike, and personally interesting to every man—a mighty effect produced by an adequate cause, the taking away of the sin of the world by a sacrifice God Himself provides.

No room is left for mistaken identity, for John identifies Jesus as the One Who comes after him, Who is greater than His forerunner and Who was before him. "This is He," this is the Messiah of prophecy and the Savior of all men. John's knowledge of Jesus is not human alone, "I knew Him not," but God-given also, with a sign for confirmation, a sign for John which was also a characteristic event in the life of Jesus. "I have beheld the Spirit

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descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon Him." Spiritual facts are made manifest to this man, whose duty it is to manifest to Israel, Jesus as the promised Christ. The previously appointed sign supplies the lack of John's personal knowledge and prepares him to note the divine identification which completes the chain of evidence.

Men who propose to build up a religion apart from God as though the soul of man were sufficient for itself, as though the divine must be eliminated until the human is convinced, as though the mind cannot act freely unless it acts by itself alone—such men discredit the divine, they doubt God. They believe in themselves, and yet when we consider the case, we find that they accept themselves only in a limited sense. Unlike John, they do not seek the divine assistance and confirmation, nor do they have the settled convictions of John or the knowledge that is so true that it is always true and true for all men. Real leaders and spiritual liberators, men who tell us of God's coming in history, men who point out our opportunities, are men who accept the divine testimony as the final confirmation of faith.

Do we wonder that John offers himself as a competent witness? His human knowledge has a divine confirmation and completion and he testifies with perfect confidence that Jesus is "the Lamb of God," that "He baptizes with the Holy Spirit," that "He is the Son of God." He is not in doubt respecting the Person in question, he is not mistaken concerning His character and work, he is not overpowered by the magnitude of the issue, but offers his testimony

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in language that reflects the clearness of his own conception, the conviction of his own mind, and the comprehensiveness of his own knowledge.

From such testimony we must expect an effect that is worthy of its cause. There is less waste of energy in the spiritual than in the natural world. The cry of the soul reaches the ear of God, and shall it not affect the heart of man? John, the inspired witness, and Jesus, the Christ—can we stop here? Does knowing and being stop with these two intelligences, these two active agents? It cannot be. Spirit speaks to spirit in its own language and on its own level of life. Two inquirers appear. Their minds are awakened, they become believers, but not without conferring with Jesus and learning of Him for themselves. Religion is part faith and part knowledge. At His humble dwelling place they conclude that Jesus is the Messiah and are ready to tell others of their faith and knowledge. Other inquirers came and one at least reaches John's conclusion, "This is the Son of God," cast in the form of direct address, "Thou art the Son of God." Jesus accepts the statement as true, and Nathanael receives the confirmation of his faith and his knowledge as the psychological condition of spiritual life and development. Religion is an open door and already he is promised further knowledge in the line of his present vision.

Nathanael comes to his own conclusion by his own method. To him, Jesus' knowledge of his inner religious life proved the divinity of Christ and His

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spiritual leadership, "Thou art the King of Israel." But we must remember that Nathanael is an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile. Here is an honest man, a real man, a man who had lived up to the best opportunity God had given him, and hence he was ready to receive the Christ in His true character at the very first interview.

Such are the first human responses to the first manifestation of the Word in His human form. Such are the beginnings of Christian life and Christian history. That is a sacred place where God meets men and men meet God in private converse. We, too, may find that sacred place. We, too, may linger there. We may meet God in the name of Jesus Christ, not fearing to look on the face of His Anointed nor even to be regarded by eyes so pure while yet so merciful.

Five distinct points in John's testimony correspond closely with a like number in the teaching of the Apostle John concerning the person and office of Christ.

1. John declares the presence among the people of the promised Messiah.
2. He identifies Jesus as the One to Whom he bears witness by divine direction.
3. He points to the divine character and the sacrificial work of Jesus.
4. He affirms the fulfillment of the sign by which Jesus was to be known to him as the Messiah.
5. His testimony had its effect upon men in bringing them to Christ.

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According to the apostle's statement concerning the person and office of Christ, as formulated by the Rev. Wm. Arnold Stevens:

"1. He was the anointed King of Israel—the Son of God.

"2. He had had a pre-existence; He was from heaven.

"3. He was to rule with justice.

"4. He was to be a Savior.

"5. He was to bestow the Holy Spirit."

These two summaries agree in fact and in doctrine. John, the apostle, and John, the witness, have essentially the same conception of Christ and breathe alike the breath of personal devotion to Him. If we are in doubt respecting the words to be attributed to each, we are not in doubt concerning the doctrine they both have taught. John, the inspired witness, standing at the beginning of the Christian order, agrees with John, the apostle, who stands at the summit of New Testament teaching.

John, the man whom God sent, exhibits the positive virtues of a religious leader. He looks upon men as beings who become. As an individual, a man may become a better individual, not only developing like a flower, but becoming a better type of man. His character may change to the very center. He may actually rise in the scale of being, ever becoming more reasonable, more responsive to moral obligation, more religious as he adopts higher ideals and yields to the impulse of higher motives.

On the material level, becoming can mean no more than change of form, as when ice becomes water,

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and water becomes vapor. The change does not affect the substance itself, but only the form it takes, and any number of these transformations leaves the original element unchanged as to its nature. So, also, on the lower levels of life, the changes we observe bring us back eventually to the same fact, as when the seed germinates and grows and produces seed again. The animal grows to maturity and reproduces itself, and here it finds its limit of becoming over which it has never been known to pass.

In the realm of personality, we find a real progress, a real becoming, so that being becomes other and more than it was intellectually, morally, and spiritually, and this process of being and becoming calls for a spiritual, moral, and intellectual leadership. The first carries the emphasis, but the other two are involved as elements of the undivided and indivisible personality. Forces on his own level of life call out the forces of his own being. Forces above him must lift and liberate him if he is ever to rise. Mechanical forces and chemical forces and life forces below the personal plane cannot call forth his powers as a self-conscious and self-determining being. Persons appeal to him as a person and this personal appeal constitutes the very essence of religious leadership.

As a religious leader, John takes account of sin and points to the remedy by which it can be completely eradicated from the human heart. Sin is not proved or defined or surreptitiously introduced. It is regarded as a universal fact, revealed by the



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law and the individual conscience. Atonement must be made for sin in order to remove it from the spirit as condemnation and as bias to evil and in order that the soul may enter into right relation to God and be what it ought to be and so become what it is capable of becoming. The religious leader requires a clear consciousness of a definite, divine impulse, a definite, divine sending; a divine message which remains unchanged, however free he may be to express it in his own words; faith in men as responsive to truth, and a clear vision of their capacity for being and becoming; a devotion to his task which enlists his whole personality; a knowledge of the vital teachings of his predecessors, which he revoices; a supreme appreciation of Jesus Christ as the ever-living Leader Who claims the personal devotion of every man.

John, the inspired witness, regards Jesus, the Christ, as the one religious Leader of the race, the one Person Who can appeal to persons from above, Who can enable men to become what they ought to be, because He is the One on Whom the Spirit descended as a dove, upon Whom the Spirit abides, and Who alone bestows the Spirit in baptism. If John feels the forward impulse that inspires and sustains him, he knows that his task is temporary and will only lead men to appreciate the greater One Whom he came to herald. His lesser leadership fits with the greater leadership of Christ, and this is its greatest value as it is its greatest glory.

## CHAPTER IV.

### SUPREMACY OF JESUS.

Jesus entered the social life of His time with the same enlightening and uplifting influence that characterized His entrance into the life of individuals with whom He found fellowship. His presence awakened expectation there and His power satisfied it. The unexpected need became the natural occasion for His kindly act of relief, while that act became the visible form in which He manifested to human eyes and conveyed to human minds the hidden glory of His deity.

The marriage at Cana on the third day after the events previously recorded, brings Jesus face to face with the task of replenishing the wine for the feast or of permitting the occasion to be dishonored by the lack of a sufficient supply. "And the mother of Jesus was there," as a guest and perhaps a friend of the family, or a semi-social leader, who was sufficiently interested to point out the need to Jesus, with the evident desire that He should save the situation. This gentle reminder and gracious request came from the one who knew Him best and who seems to have expected Him not to procure by purchase, but to produce in some supernatural way, the needed supply. She, therefore, enjoins the servants to obey Him and carry out any directions He may see fit to give.

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Jesus encourages no interference with His plans and His purposes, and refuses to be directed by any one, even the most intimate friend. He asserts His own independence and freedom of action, a very suggestive fact for all who pray to the Virgin Mary as though she were able to counsel or even command the Christ. His life in the home for thirty years, and especially His peculiar personality, had raised high the expectations of His mother, for He had performed no miracles as yet by which she could justify her anticipations or on which she could base her request. "This beginning of signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee." None was performed in childhood or early manhood, and those described in the apocryphal writings plainly show evidences of pious fiction. His miracles mark His maturity, and hence reveal His good judgment, His purpose to minister to men in mind and spirit even when feeding or healing the body, and also His strength of manhood closely associated with His divine power. John appreciated the glory manifested by the miracle at Cana, but we may well believe that to him Jesus was always more than His miracles, after their performance as well as before. They in no way add to His power or His person by means of exercise or development, but simply give visible expression to both in a manner that appeals to the minds of men through the avenue of their senses.

The directions given by Jesus to the servants anticipate the result produced. His first miracle is no fortuitous affair, no experiment narrowly escaping a possible failure or barely achieving a partial suc-

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cess. His first command, "Fill the water-pots with water," has only been carried out when His second, "Draw out now and bear unto the ruler of the feast," completes His self-set task in the little social gathering at Cana that day.

Jesus considers the contents of those six water-pots to be wine, and asks the servants to act accordingly. But is this the fact? May we not turn an affirmation into an interrogation and ask with a fair show of reason, Has "the water now become wine"? Has the word of Jesus alone caused that becoming? Jesus considers it wine, the servants serve it as wine, the ruler of the feast pronounces it wine of a superior quality, though he was an unbiased judge, for he knew not its origin and he was a competent judge, for he distinguished its quality in comparison with what had been previously presented. He is impressed so favorably that he calls the bridegroom, to express his congratulations with candor and delight, while the bridegroom, no doubt, shares his opinion, as well as the guests at the marriage feast.

The closing fact and the crowning truth is the effect upon the disciples, who appreciate this manifestation of "His glory." They behold His divine power, associate it with His person, and therefore believe on Him. Without doubt they had believed on Him before, but now their faith rests on Him more intelligently and with added assurance. Perhaps their minds pursued their accustomed path, running before the great Leader and expecting Him presently to manifest His power in the liberation of

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the Jewish people from the Roman rule in order to restore the ancient glory of the chosen nation. Some may have believed on Him as the Son of God according to their previous confession, their thoughts turning inward and Godward rather than outward and earthward. Surely each one in that little company had sufficient evidence to convince him and abundant reason to believe that Jesus exercised power over nature like God, immediate, causal, creative.

John calls the miracle a sign which points to Jesus as a divine messenger with a divine message. He reads the event according to the rules of religious thinking. The exercise of divine power evidences the presence of a divine person and confirms his message as coming from God. Jesus was more than a man to His disciples, for His act was more than human. He was more than a man to His mother, who evidently expected Him to do what no mere man could do. He could not be less than a prophet, God's representative, God's spokesman, Who came to declare the divine word and the divine will, and Who confirmed both by divine agency. His message must, therefore, be from God, as He himself was also, and hence both must be accepted accordingly.

The doctrine of the miracle at Cana includes the divine power of Jesus as it appears in two forms, that of divine control and that of divine relation. He exercises a divine control over nature, and thereby shows that He holds a divine relation to nature. That control is absolute and that relation is

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immediate, causal, creative. He speaks and it is done, He commands and the result honors His word. His word expresses His will not only to intelligent beings, but also to inert and unintelligent matter. The change which takes place has no assignable cause except His word and His will. One substance becomes another, one chemical combination becomes a different one, not by evolution, for there was nothing in the water that could change it into wine, either instantly or in the course of time; not merely by the addition of a new ingredient capable of effecting the change, but by raising it to the plane and the consistency of a life-product without the usual life-process. Nor can His power be separated from His person in John's thinking, for Jesus acts in this instance without prayer or any appeal to God, as though His relation to God were secondary or only human. His power is divine, and hence His person is divine, and in the acceptance of this natural conclusion they rejoice in this first manifestation of His deity in the field of material things.

Every age and every individual is called upon to place an estimate on the Person of Christ. It evidently costs men an effort to rise to the complete acceptance of His deity. As Rev. Augustus H. Strong has said, "We constantly tend to an atheistic and unchristian view of nature." This intellectual and moral lapse must be met and overcome by the religious leader in every age. This habit of mind must be radically changed, and hence this beginning of miracles so appropriate then is quite as appro-

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priate now so far as it fosters faith in Christ. Men are not in urgent need of such a miracle to-day as an impressive spectacle, but they do need to learn its lesson concerning Christ's relation to nature and Christ's control over nature, both of which remain unchanged.

From the same author we quote again, "This miracle shows us, on the contrary, that nature is only the expression of the divine mind and will, and that this divine mind and will is the mind and will of Jesus Christ." Hence, His easy control of nature and His immediate relation to it. Hence, also, His manifestation of His glory with nature as canvas and pigment. It lends itself to Him and serves men who believe in Him and who

"Behind creation's throbbing screen

Catch movements of the great Unseen."

"Christ's miracles were signs of something higher than themselves." They point to fundamental being, the personal will as a final fact, to Himself as the Son of man and the Son of God. It is not a tentative, but a true and final explanation we require, and in which alone our minds can rest. In this connection, our author asserts that "the universe is moral and religious at its core," and also that "in the miracle of Cana, Christ shows Himself to be the Life of nature, the Ennobler of nature, the Interpreter of nature, as only He can be Who was in the beginning with God and was Himself God." Nothing less than John's conception of Jesus as the self-revealing God affords a sufficient philosophical basis for the miracle at Cana, the first in a long list

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which has been recorded, and a yet longer list which passes with the merest mention.

Should we not expect Jesus to show His relation to nature as well as to man if, indeed, His teaching is fundamental? Do we not expect Him to answer the question of becoming in the realm of matter as well as in that of mind? Nature must surely furnish one field of His activity. Here He must spell out His divine wisdom and purpose so that men are given the best possible opportunity to think of Him as He is and then believe on Him because they know Him. His will works directly and silently as in the ordinary course of nature and without any apparent hindrance. It is causal, while having no apparent connection with material things save His spoken word. This wonderful will fits into this ordinary occasion in the social life of men with simple propriety, and might have left no record of its presence had not the unexpected need of the hour called that will into exercise, with a result that is unquestionably divine and that at once proclaimed Jesus to be human in sympathy and service, and divine in power and person.

The cleansing of the temple follows closely the account of the miracle at Cana, containing, as it does, a similar doctrine. In the latter we have the manifestation of the divine power of Jesus in the realm of nature, and in the former a like manifestation in the field of religious life. His authority is asserted in the temple at Jerusalem, the ecclesiastical center in the Jewish system, an authority that was not derived from the Roman government nor from



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the Jewish Sanhedrin, but which was, nevertheless, respected as real and righteous. His was not the authority of superior force, but of an honest heart and a reasonable mind, determined to uphold the religious standards of His people, an authority that was not blinded by personal gain, but one that was derived directly from God and stood for the honor of His house. He exercises His authority, not as civil or ecclesiastical, but as divine in its origin and spirit, its influence and outcome.

Jesus "found" men in the courts of the temple who did not belong there and who were not permitted to remain there. He was actively interested in the house of God. He came not to condone wrong or to wink at abuses. He came to establish righteousness upon the earth, and hence He drove out the sheep and oxen offered for sale as sacrifices, overthrew the tables of the money changers, poured out their money as a thing without real value, and commanded the dove-sellers to take their wares out of the sacred precincts. The birds are not liberated. He destroys no property, as He appropriates none. A single purpose inspires Him, the cleansing of the house of God from this mercenary desecration. His command interprets His act, "Take these things hence; make not My Father's house a house of merchandise." Religion must be rescued from false interpretations. Mercenary men are willing to be religious and serve the temple of God if it can be made a convenient market place and if their self-complacency can supersede the divine command. The priests permitted, or perhaps approved, the per-

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nicious practice, and thus error sprang from the very foundation of truth. But Jesus showed a special interest in the temple, because He stood in a special relation to it, since He could speak of it as "My Father's house." His disciples note His zeal, while the Jews question His authority and ask for a sign in justification of His act. Jesus meets their demand. His authority should have its attestation. It will have for them and for all the world. The sign to which He points and the one He gave to them in the course of His earthly ministry, the one which became a result of their opposition and their act of intended destruction, was the only sign the Jews really accepted as authentic, His death at their hands, and His resurrection in spite of all their precautions. His supremacy is not overcome by His death, but on the other hand, we are compelled to see a new evidence of it. "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." Here, at last, they were given positive proof of His authority and evidence that should have been conclusive to those who habitually rejected Him. The form of His statement conceals His meaning from the Jews, while their own mental attitude hinders any rational interpretation. They are materialists, and think only of the visible temple and the years required for its construction. After His resurrection, His disciples remembered His words, appreciated His meaning, and knew that He saw the end from the beginning.

In this first exercise of His authority in the temple, the first difference of thinking and separation of mind between Jesus and His Jewish

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opposers appears. They gradually assumed the attitude of enemies and finally produce, or at least occasion, the very result he predicts. "This gospel is the record of two opposing tendencies," says Rev. Augustus H. Strong. "God's self-manifestation in Christ stirs up hatred that brings the Savior to the cross, but it also awakens love that ensures the triumph of His kingdom." As a divine Person, Jesus must of necessity find friends and face foes. As positive in His religious life and teaching, He must make both. Old conceptions will come in conflict with the new; the old social order must be modified; the old religious system must be dissolved, or forever remain fixed in an impassive stare. The divine Presence among men means new life, new bonds of fellowship, the constitution of society on the basis of new principles. The authority of Jesus will be known and His power felt, for both touch the foundations of human life, individual, social, governmental, and cannot be successfully resisted or set aside.

The doctrine we derive from the cleansing of the temple has three elements: the divine authority of Jesus, His divine right, and His divine power. None of these is derived from the church or the State, and the presumption is that they come from God. Such is His own assumption, if not His assertion, in this connection, and He simply leaves His act stand as its own vindication at the bar of reason and conscience. The sign which He offered as proof of His right to interfere with temple abuses, He gave in due time, not simply as a great historic event nor

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merely as a doctrinal deliverance, but as a psychological development that discloses before all men His personality in its twofold nature, human and divine. His authority is neither temporary nor limited, but suited to His nature and His personality. It must be understood in the light of all that follows and all that precedes. In the language of Prof. Henry C. Sheldon: "The Word was with God, that is, in living union with Him. He was God, that is, the adequate image and counterpart of the eternal Father. On the other hand, the Word is the medium of manifestation. He bridges over the interval between the invisible Father and the visible system of things." "He brings us authentic tidings of these invisible things." With this view clearly before us, the authority of Jesus becomes a matter of fact and moment, a matter of course and consequence. The doctrine contained in John's account of the cleansing of the temple has ample foundation in the Person of Christ, and challenges us as a matter of faith and reason to adopt it as our own.

The second chapter of John's Gospel closes with the statement that many believed on His name at the Passover in Jerusalem, but that Jesus did not trust Himself to them. They were convinced by the signs He wrought in their presence, but their faith was incomplete or immature. It needed other elements or further development or additional confirmation. They saw the signs, but did they really see the One who gave them? Did they know who He was? Did they feel morally pledged to Him? Jesus did not trust Himself to them, not because of

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His own timidity, but because of their lack of conviction and personal devotion to Him.

He knew them, and because of His knowledge, He withheld His confidence. He is not adrift among men, now the victim of their professed faith and again of their enforced fear. He is easily supreme in the realm of mind as well as in that of worship, and even that of nature, with her various elements and processes. The supremacy of Jesus in the mind of man is elsewhere illustrated, as though the subject required the most thorough treatment, being the principal field of His present activity.

"He knew all men," and hence did not confide in these particular ones who had a measure of faith in Him. He knew all men collectively and individually, and so He knew each man in himself and in his social and political relations. The mind of each one was open to His view, as material things are apparent to the natural eye. Like God, He looks into the soul and sees what it has been, what it is, and even what it will be. He knows how any man stands related to Him. He measures the personal knowledge and strength of devotion in each individual case, suffering no defeat by misplaced confidence, nor ever wronging any man by discrediting or discounting the faith he really has.

No error enters here at the most critical point in the consideration of the supremacy of Jesus. The negative statement, "He needed not that any one should bear witness concerning man," assures us that Jesus possessed this power in His own right, by His own faculty of perception or intuition, and

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by His authoritative entrance into the invisible realm of the human mind and even the charmed circle of human personality. His kingdom could not be ruled by report. Second-hand knowledge could not take the place of immediate, divine knowing. The kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom, the congregation of just men made perfect, that assembly of beings in which spirit knows spirit even as God knows the spirit in man and as the human spirit knows God.

The final statement with reference to Jesus' supremacy in the realm of mind asserts His perfect knowledge of the contents of the human mind. "He Himself knew what was in man." No unexplored remainders in conscience or intellect or will confused Him at one point or confronted Him at another. The contents of the mind were as the alphabet before Him, which lost none of its simplicity when combined in words and sentences, in chapters and books. Intellect, wonderful in its power of reasoning and research and constructive conception, sensibility, revealing delicacy of feeling and power of emotion, will, with a capacity for degradation equal to its capacity for exaltation to the sublime heights of moral rectitude and religious faith; all alike were the subjects of His knowledge. Even the free will of man held no mysteries for Him and never misled Him by a hair's breadth. With the contents of the soul before Him, with the key to its inner life and motives, with a better knowledge of its aims and ideals and aspirations than that of the soul itself, its unsolved problems became the un-

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studied conclusions of Jesus. He knows man essentially and fundamentally and cannot know him better by his own act or confession.

John shows us in the passage under consideration, the supremacy of Jesus in the realm of nature, of religion, and of mind. If Jesus stands related to nature so that it is responsive to His word, if He rightly asserts His relation to the religious worship of the temple, can we think of Him as excluded from the mind of man, or must we rather believe that he is related to the mind of every man, fundamentally and essentially, and that this relation is immediate and that it should govern the personal and social life of all men? This threefold relation constitutes the logical unity of the second chapter of the Gospel of John, giving us three distinct views of a single subject.

As we follow the course of John's thought, we are impressed with the depth of his doctrine. As we follow Jesus (the name uniformly used in this second chapter), and behold His signs as here recorded and here referred to, and especially as we see Him revealed in act and word, we may learn to believe on Him so sincerely that with His perfect knowledge He may yet confide in us.

## CHAPTER V.

### MAN AS A SPIRITUAL BEING.

The revelation of God involves the revelation of man as a practical and doctrinal necessity. The light that enables men to see God gives them a clearer vision of themselves. Every step they take in the process of knowing God is a step in self-knowledge also. The knowledge of self must keep pace with the knowledge of God if the progress of the latter is not to be arrested.

By showing Himself supreme in the midst of nature, in the established order of religious worship, and over the minds of men who gathered about Him, He gives men a certain clue to His character. He reveals Himself. Then the next step in the progress of their knowledge is to teach men to know themselves as spiritual beings. They must be brought to His viewpoint of life and His basis of teaching. Their mental action will then aid and not obstruct the course of His thought. If He has laid the foundation for constructive thinking in reference to Himself by showing His universal supremacy, He now lays the foundation for man's conception of himself as spiritual, first, by showing what this signifies, and, second, by showing what it involves.

The third chapter follows closely the logical conclusion of the second. There Jesus enters the realm



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of the mind and considers human conduct; here He presses into the realm of the spirit and considers man's relation to God. There He shows His supremacy in nature, worship, and mind, while here He appears as the one Teacher Who can instruct men concerning the new birth as a religious experience and a spiritual necessity in order to enter the new life which He describes as invisible, spiritual, and eternal.

A man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, has become sufficiently interested in the teaching of Jesus, and in Jesus as a teacher, to come to Him, under cover of darkness, for personal conference and instruction. We need not suppose that he came to offer advice, as his subsequent action gives him the other attitude. The conversation resulting rises above the level of mere discussion. It is no mere comparison or conflict of ideas. This distinguished student is led by this distinguished Teacher into a course of thinking before unknown to him, though he was "the teacher of Israel" and might have known more than he did.

The Gospel of John has been called the Gospel of the conversations, in view of the fact that more than any other, it records particular interviews of our Lord with individuals. As the Gospel of the Person of Christ, it naturally appeals to personality everywhere and calls it out in earnest thought and interested conversation. These conversations as here recorded, harmonize with John's philosophy and lead us to note another fact equally worthy of emphasis. They reflect the method of Christian work

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in its very beginnings. Jesus comes unattended, but He does not long continue alone. His presence is His appeal. His conversation opens the channel of communication and awakens an interest that is earnest and active.

Nicodemus comes to Jesus with an opinion already formed. He recognizes Him as a teacher and describes Him as a teacher who has come from God. He is not a product of the schools. As a man who is accustomed to think and able to reach conclusions, he states the ground of his opinion, "For no man can do the signs that Thou doest except God be with him." This personal knowledge forms the path of approach and opens the way for personal intercourse. He virtually introduces himself to this Person, Whose wisdom and friendship he desires to share. Honest and not evasive, earnest and not argumentative, he meets a mind and heart that more than answer to his own.

Jesus accepts at its full value the knowledge Nicodemus has of Him, and immediately declares that there is something more required to place him beside his new Teacher. The kingdom of God, the association of noble souls, the real fellowship of the good, has its own beginning, its own basis of being and life. "Except one be born anew, or from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Birth is the entrance way into the kingdom of God. The new birth is the primary condition of the new life. Birth from above is a psychological necessity in order to bring a man into personal relations with Christ. Nicodemus must be attuned to his Teacher, as in

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wireless telegraphy instrument is adjusted to instrument, in order to secure communication of thought and to enter into personal association. The stamp of the divine must mark the human, and not the reverse. The centers of the human self-conscious, self-governing life must be brought into harmony with the divine in order to establish a relation such as Jesus contemplates in His kingdom.

Difference of meaning in the use of words separates the two minds. Nicodemus thinks of a physical form of birth, while Jesus thinks of a spiritual form. The thought of Nicodemus is materialistic, impossible, irrelevant. He fixes his attention upon the idea of birth and apparently ignores or misapprehends the source and nature of the spiritual birth as Jesus defines it. Jesus explains by stating that there is a birth of water, in public confession of sin and profession of faith, and also of the Spirit as the agent of regeneration, and of the new life thus constituted. Physical birth and spiritual birth are separate and distinct processes that lead to separate and distinct results. Each has its own level of life and the lower cannot rise to the higher of itself nor does the higher ever sink down to the lower. "Ye must be born anew," is enunciated as a universal principle of religious life. It is a principle that applies to all men, however refined or moral or devoted to the law. They must be born from above in order to enter the kingdom of God and attain the new life, which is the only real life. Spiritual birth marks one distinct step in the ascending scale of

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being, and harmonizes with all we find below, whether in man or in nature. Spirit-birth is a necessary condition of Spirit-life, and Spirit-life is the only life that is free and unlimited in its movements and its agency. "The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

Jesus considers the doctrine of the new birth as coming within the comprehension of a teacher of Israel and the field of his instruction, but the present conversation develops the fact that Nicodemus had not mastered it as an idea or an experience, though it belongs to the present life. It is among the earthly things men can and ought to know and yet find it hard to believe and receive even from the lips of our Lord. If this first lesson has not been learned and this fundamental doctrine mastered, how can the advanced teachings, the really "heavenly things," be communicated?

Personal religion is not only theoretical knowledge, but also practical knowledge, knowledge that has passed into the very constitution of man. "We speak that which we know and bear witness of that which we have seen." Sense and reason have tested this knowledge, thus bringing it into the same class with all other knowledge. Not less sure, not less accurate, but only more reliable and more real because it lies in the field of the mental and spiritual, the very center of man's being and knowing.

The "heavenly things" are above and beyond man, and hence the Son of man descends to the level

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of ordinary human life in order to make known these things. The invisible, the spiritual, the eternal, these are for man here and now, not as a dream or a vision, but as the very substance of his life, the reality that remains when the visible, the natural, the temporal have faded like a mist from his view. The prisoner of hope must see the prospect before him, near and distant, in order to have a normal development of his being and in order to influence his becoming. His spiritual development cannot be irrational and unscientific if it links itself with the Son of man Who descends out of heaven that He may lead men up into the realm of heavenly being and heavenly life.

And now Jesus seems to take the text Nicodemus gave Him at the beginning of their conversation, "Thou art a teacher come from God," and proceeds to describe Himself as the Son of man, Who descended out of heaven, Who is not a product of earth, Who is, while on earth, essentially in heaven, and Who must be lifted up like the serpent in the wilderness that whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life. Jesus' conception of Himself as the real head and representative of the race is a distinct advance on the thought of Nicodemus, who must have listened with profound interest to those wonderful words which Jesus had spoken to him and which, according to scholars of after ages, inspired John to pen that all-inclusive sentence respecting the love of God and the gift of His only begotten Son. If this great sentence, with what follows, was spoken to Nicodemus, as some com-

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mentators hold, did Nicodemus identify the Son of man and the Son of God in the Person of Jesus, and thus obtain a glimpse, if not a steady view, of the one central figure in the Gospel of John? Jesus asserted His deity wherever there was a mind and heart prepared to receive it. He declared His sacrifice for sin at the first opportunity. He enters history by entering the human mind as well as by entering the human body. God's love measured by the sending of His son, the humanity of Jesus, His deity and His sacrifice for sin, all these are immediately and vitally related to the new birth and man as a spiritual being. They are so considered by John and perhaps by Jesus, and hence are recorded in this connection. They indicate the method and type of the spiritual life and offer a cause equal to the effect. Believe and so be born from above, so enter the Spirit-life, so be associated with the Son of man in His kingdom. This is the life eternal, as distinguished from the life temporal. Eternal life is a present fact and not only a future reality. It arises from the manifestation of the Divine will in the life of the individual. It lifts the man above the limitations of his present life as a citizen of this world, so that he knows himself in other relations. In the higher activities of his being he transcends the limitations of time and space and enjoys the light and liberty of eternity. According to a recent writer, "Whenever a man really prays, he passes out of time into eternity."

Thus the radiant thought of Jesus rises on these ascending lines of spiritual light. Nicodemus must

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have wondered and rejoiced alternately as he measured the depth of Jesus' knowledge of man's nature and man's need, and the height of His knowledge of God's greatness and God's goodness. But why should not the great Teacher touch the very foundations of knowledge on the side of man and then also on the side of God? If, indeed, He came not to conceal Himself, but to reveal Himself, and if in reality He is the human and divine Person John has already declared Him to be, then we must expect to find in His teaching the final answer to the deepest cravings of the human mind and heart.

Jesus is not disappointing to Nicodemus, inasmuch as man in his perfection cannot be disappointing to imperfect man and God revealed can never be less than deity. Jesus promises eternal life to any one who believes on the uplifted Son of man. So also His promise of eternal life is given to him who believes on the only begotten Son. Does Nicodemus see the two united in one Person? Does he realize that God in His divine love bestows His divine Gift and that the Son of God and the Son of man are the distributing centers of the divine life?

Human personality in its perfection, as we see it in Jesus, and as we will perhaps find it nowhere else, is associated with, and perhaps conditioned by, the divine personality. If there is association in the divine life, may not this be a necessary condition of normal human life? Perhaps our own personal experience will suggest that human personality at its best is not altogether self-constituted, but that every

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sincere soul must say with the Psalmist, "All my springs are in Thee." The divine forever constituting the human, and the human forever imaging the divine, such is the order of existence as it unfolds before us, such is the arch of being that impresses us with its fitness, its strength, its beauty. With Nicodemus, we wonder and rejoice when our Teacher tells us that God's love for the world brings God's Son into the world as God's gift to men, collectively and individually, so that the believer shall not perish, but have eternal life. Love gives, always gives, and supreme love, divine love, gives itself—the best it can give. The Son is God's "unspeakable gift," through Whom men escape a lower life not of the eternal kind and quality, and freely enter those superior and supernal relations that bind the soul to the Son and so to God, and hence also to all beings who have a place in His kingdom. This supreme, this fundamental, relation is the one that conditions, or rather constitutes, the man as really religious, that fits him into his proper place in the order of being as divinely constituted, that produces a worthy self-hood in the midst of a society and kingdom that is invisible, spiritual, eternal. "Eye hath not seen or ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him, but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit."

God sends His Son, not to judge the world, as we might easily expect when guilt is thereby confronted by moral purity, but primarily to save the world.



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His coming inevitably reveals sin, but it calls men to a higher life that is free from sin. Salvation is primary and judgment is secondary, yet men may reverse this order by their own attitude of mind. The believer may be free from the operation of judgment, while the unbeliever precipitates it upon himself by his rejection of the Son. His act goes back to God, and the One he regarded far off is found to be near, but only as "a swift witness" against him. With an opportunity to choose either light or darkness, men who choose the latter show their love for it. This becomes their judgment that what they loved is confirmed by their own choice and then also by divine permission. This choice, thus confirmed, has no provision for change. It continues in being, rejecting light, rejecting the Son, rejecting God. The evil doer hates the light, while the one who does well, loves the light and seeks it evermore. The difference lies in the persons and not in the light. "He that doeth the truth" comes to the light, because he co-operates with God, and his works have a permanent value in His kingdom.

If love is the primal relation of God to man, faith is the primal relation of man to God. Man cannot love God till he knows Him, and he cannot know Him without believing Him. When God sends His Son, He challenges man's faith by His presence. Faith regards God as near and not far off, as trustworthy and not to be doubted and disobeyed. Archbishop Whately says, "Disbelieving is believing, since to disbelieve any assertion is to be-

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lieve its contradictory." Professor Flint elucidates this idea as follows: "In religion, as in every other department of thought and life, man is bound to regulate his belief by the simple but comprehensive principle that evidence is the measure of assent. Disbelief ought to be regulated by the same principle, for disbelief is belief, but belief of the opposite. Unbelief is the opposite both of belief and disbelief. Ignorance is to unbelief what knowledge is to belief or disbelief. The whole duty of man, as to belief, is to believe and disbelieve according to evidence, and neither to believe nor disbelieve when the evidence fails him." Jesus offers the evidence that reaches the mind of Nicodemus and of any earnest inquirer, and hence He has a right to expect a corresponding faith. The mind and heart of Deity make their appeal to the mind and heart of humanity. In His divine and human Personality, Jesus is God's appeal to man, while the only appropriate response is that of faith, the personal confidence and commitment that issues in a regenerate heart and a religious life.

The new birth means a new being and a new order of life. Something radical takes place, for something radical is required. The human agent co-operates with the divine agent, the Holy Spirit, in the realization of the Spirit-birth and the attainment of the Spirit-life. The effect is worthy of the cause and the cause is amply able to produce the effect. The new birth is, to all intents and purposes, the beginning of a new being, the beginning of the spiritual life of the reborn, a life that may be called

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divine by a limited use of the term and in recognition of its principal element. Thus the Gospel of John, "with its profound spiritual philosophy, deepens and purifies the currents of life," to use the language of the Rev. Henry M. King, and so makes room for the invisible, the spiritual, and the eternal, and invites man to become, by faith in Christ, a spiritual being in the sense in which Christ teaches us to think of him.

## CHAPTER VI.

### JOHN'S TESTIMONY REPEATED AND COMPLETED.

Repetition is a common method of emphasis in the Scriptures, and the repetition of John's testimony serves this purpose in a way we are able to appreciate. This initial witness never receded from his first position, but rather advanced as he gained more knowledge of Him Whom he heralded. By comparing his last recorded statement with his earlier ones, we are assured that he fully understood the meaning of his own mission and his own message, and that in his last recorded testimony he placed special emphasis on the deity of Christ. His mind found no real resting place till it reached this solid foundation, where every witness of Christ finally finds rest. His position is more clearly stated, and we easily note the progress in his thought and the completion of his conception of Christ as a divine being.

In his earlier and in his later testimony, John states two points which relate to himself. In both we find the confession, "I am not the Christ," the truth of which was already being written in history. The second point of reference to himself has two aspects, one looking back and the other looking forward. In his first testimony he had said, "He was before me," pointing apparently to the pre-existence of our Lord. In the second testimony he

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says, "He must increase, but I must decrease," pointing to the future greatness and glory of the Christ. No one can confuse the two and take the one for the other. Jesus and John stand in contrast and not in comparison. The superiority of Jesus is beyond question or dispute, a superiority which in no way robs John of his own honor, but rather affords him the opportunity to direct men with greater certainty to this greater One.

With reference to Jesus, he says in his second testimony: First, He comes from above and testifies of what He has seen and heard; second, He was sent by God, speaks the words of God, and imparts the Spirit; third, He is the Son and enjoys the love of the Father, Who has given all things into His hands. In his first testimony this last article does not appear, while here it is presented with its full value and becomes the real resting place of his mind. In all three, the emphasis is placed on the higher nature of Christ as the supreme fact that calls for corresponding consideration.

Two statements follow, one referring to the believer and one to the disbeliever or the disobedient. He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son, shall not see life. His theory is not speculative knowledge but practical truth, if there be such a distinction, and reflects the facts as they are found in life. He is thinking through to the confines of knowledge on all sides, and he is thinking according to the principles of Christian teaching.

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Thus John's first testimony is completed and emphasized by his second, which discredits nothing in the first, but lends it force by its conception of Christ as the Son and God as His Father.

The proximity of John and Jesus in their work of baptism and the question of a Jew about purifying, call out this second testimony, but the doctrinal value gives it its place and its importance in the Gospel. From the study of man as a spiritual being, we turn to the study of Christ as the Son, the real source of spiritual life. Jesus says the new birth is from above, while John says the Christ is from above. Both speak of heavenly things and earthly things in contrast. Both speak of the Spirit, and with the same general conception of Him. Both tell of the Father's love and of the Son in His relation to the Father and to humanity. Both tell of eternal life as the gift of the Son and the possession of the believer, and also of the sad failure of the unbeliever who has forfeited the favor of God. John's final testimony seems to reflect the teaching of Jesus, though the Master surpasses His faithful witness without in the least discrediting him.

John's testimony, as repeated and completed, shows no change in essence, though changed in emphasis and modified in form. John justifies Jesus in view of His activity in baptizing and His aggressive leadership. He is not jealous of Jesus, even in his own field of religious activity. The success of Jesus in winning the public ear was to be expected. He is the bridegroom, the one central figure, the Person above all other persons. He it is Who increases as

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a religious leader, while His forerunner decreases when his work and office have been fulfilled. John rises to his height and passes his zenith, while Jesus knows no zenith beyond which there comes inevitable decline. His task is never completed, but actively proceeds from age to age. His Personality is a sun that never sets. It is ever-present and ever-radiant.

Like a witness on the stand, John gives an account of himself before he undertakes to declare his knowledge of the Christ. I am not the Christ, but am sent before Him. I am the friend of the bridegroom and rejoice greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. I must decrease, but He must increase. John knows himself in relation to Jesus and in relation to God. The man who knows God knows himself, and failure to know himself should be sufficient evidence to convince us of his failure to know God. A man's knowledge of God must be read on the dial of his own consciousness. It must enter into his own personal experience. It cannot continue to be theoretical and speculative, and he who cannot read that dial, who defaces it by evil acts, by wrong motives and mental states, carelessly or consciously hinders his knowledge of God. John knows himself in his final testimony just as he knew himself in his first, the historic forerunner of Jesus, the proper antecedent of Jesus in the thought and life of the people of Palestine, the Roman empire, and the whole world.

John's conception of Christ has had a development that adds to its value. He thinks of Him as

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increasing, while he himself, in the nature of the case, must decrease. Great as the Messiah is from the very first, He still grows in the estimation of His faithful servant. There are no bounds to His being on one side. His humanity seems to be the center and His deity the circumference. John looks along the lines of His life and sees no limits anywhere. He must increase in human history from age to age, increase in influence on the course of human thought and life, increase in the estimation of every believer, if not also in the deliberate opinion of every thoughtful mind.

Humanity fails, but Deity forever rises and remains, and only as Deity inspires humanity, can humanity come to its perfection of being and life in Jesus or in any man. The Christ comes from above and is above all. His being and life are heavenly, and therefore unlike the earthly life which surrounded Him. Life has its descending as well as its ascending scale, and earthly life inspires men to think earthly thoughts. These thoughts they speak. But here is One Who comes from heaven and tells of things eternal, though many men fail to receive this divine testimony concerning these divine things. They who receive His witness set their seal to this, "that God is true." He has fulfilled His promise. Their conclusion, individually attained, is final for them, embodying their thought and theory of life, their conduct among men, their hope and preparation for the future. Such a conclusion is not continually called up for review because it has back of it both reason and revelation.



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He whom God sends, speaks God's words, and such are the words of the Christ to Whom God giveth not the Spirit by measure, since Christ is all He should be, and hence sets no limits to the divine. No man has measured His obedience to God or His faithfulness to man. As there is no limit of obedience on the one hand, there is no limit of bestowment on the other. He is, therefore, the full fountain of spiritual life for men, forever transforming and enriching them by His divine presence and power.

John completes his conception of the Christ by thinking of Him as the Son Whom the Father loves and Whom He honors by giving all things into His hand. He leaves no open space and loose ends in his system of being and life. All centers in God, the Father, Whose love is ministered to men through the Son, His appointed administrator of the universe. John has a theology as well as a religion, a philosophy as well as an experience. He preached and baptized because he was sent by God, because his message never grew less on his lips, and because the knowledge of God pressed in upon his mind and heart from its infinite source.

When he says, He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life, but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him, John is looking upon men with the eye of a religious leader. He sees the path of life stretching before the feet of all men and inviting them to enter it. He sees the path of disobedience, and how it leads men away from God, separate from the Son

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and beyond the vision of life, inasmuch as disobedience disqualifies men even to see life. Farther yet they stray from the Source of life and more and more conscious they become that the wrath of God abideth on them. Here his testimony ends. Here his thought abides as though in perpetual appeal to each soul, warning it against the evil and directing it to Christ, Who alone can lead men back to God, the source and giver of life eternal.

No new theology afflicts this first religious leader in this first Christian age, when, in those early, formative days, there might have been occasion for new thought of every description. True to the Christ, John was true to himself. His conception of the Christ finds its completion in the Son, and his thought of man's sin and man's salvation are developed and deepened accordingly. His doctrine was preachable, practical, personal. He stood next to Christ as His faithful friend and forerunner, nor ever left his appointed place. His view of himself and his view of the Christ suffered no radical change from the beginning to the end of his ministry. The author of the fourth Gospel does not speak of him as "the Baptist," for his baptism had long before given place to that which Christ instituted, and he thinks of him now as the one whose privilege it was to appreciate the coming Christ and bear witness of Him in terms adapted to the people of his own age and to all men of earnest and inquiring mind.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE NATURE OF TRUE WORSHIP AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AS A SPIRIT.

Two reasons are assigned for the presence of Jesus in Samaria when He conversed with the woman at the well. He left Judea because the Pharisees had heard of His success in winning disciples by baptism as well as by teaching and healing. The Pharisees objected to His healing and teaching, but far more objectionable must have been the gathering of followers who were bound to Him by the rite of baptism. In going to Galilee, where He would be free from Pharisaic espionage, He must needs pass through Samaria as the shortest and best way, and we may well believe also for the purpose of declaring the truth to a Samaritan woman who was ready to receive it, and to many others who, through her testimony, were led to accept Him as the Savior.

Jesus had an aptitude for discovering inquirers and liberating them from the bondage of traditional conceptions and long-established customs, for making room in their minds for God and then for satisfying the need He had awakened by making God known to them. He talks to them of God as though He knew God and as though what He said was self-evidencing, like His own personality. The life of Jesus cannot be written in event alone, as though this exhausted it. It issues in duty and doctrine, and continually rises into the moral and spiritual or

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brings the moral and spiritual into ordinary life and common events.

"In the fourth Gospel nothing happens, but everything is," according to the discriminating statement of Rev. Henry S. Nash. Truth has no transitions and God does not grow. When the Word became flesh, Deity was not augmented or enlarged, but the divine purpose was realized in Jesus Christ as the Savior of men and the Revealer of God. Hence, we are inclined to think that the moral destitution of the woman at the well, coupled with her willingness to receive His teaching and Himself as the Messiah, caused Him to pass through Samaria. His physical need after His journey, coupled with His willingness to receive a drink from her, contrary to Jewish custom, causes Him to ask it of this sinful Samaritan woman who came to draw water at Jacob's well. However real His need, it is not the only cause or even the chief cause, as appears in the progress of their conversation. His need is real, according to its kind, and occasions the discovery of her need, which is one of another kind. And so each has the opportunity and the ability to aid the other, the one supplying water from the well and the Other, the living water, which is the gift of God.

Jesus seeks to secure action on the part of this one whom He seeks to aid. He suggests the action He seeks to secure. Such is His philosophy of being and becoming as we are able to derive it from Him, and as He was able to embody it in the affairs of every-day life. Before Him is one whose human sympathies are constrained by race prejudice, whose

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intellect acts under the influence of religious tradition, but whose will has shown a certain force and freedom. To that will He appeals as the most likely path of approach and the most likely faculty to respond to His teaching.

Her complete surprise at His request for a drink of water from the well calls forth His proposal to give to her living water at her request. She would make request in spite of prejudice and custom, He assures her, if she knew two things, the gift of God and Who it is that says to her, Give Me to drink. Thus, revelation begins at the bottom and all over again with each individual of the race. The soul must come into the divine Presence and not rest satisfied with the divine gift. The saving grace of God does not take the place of God Himself. Here is the essence of religion. It is that manifestation of God to the individual soul which answers its deepest need. The knowledge this woman had of God and worship and religion had not saved her from her sin nor had it satisfied her mind as to the relative sacredness of Gerazim and Jerusalem as centers of worship. The task of Jesus is twofold, calling out the knowledge she had, and then presenting new truth, personal in interest, applicable at that moment, and calculated to reform and reconstruct all her thinking.

This wayward woman doubts the ability of Jesus to supply the living water, because she thinks in terms of her own ordinary life, and fails to grasp the spiritual significance of His words or to see behind them the spiritual Being who calmly utters

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them. Hers is the common failure which precedes the opening of the mind to spiritual truth and spiritual beings. She does not reject the teaching of Jesus, but simply fails to understand it. Placing "this water" and "the water I shall give him," in contrast, she seems to note a difference, but when she asks for the living water, she asks for it just as she would ask for the water in the well. She is still a materialist in her religious thinking. Evidently her request in this form cannot be granted, nor can it be made to mean to her what it meant to Jesus. As a master in psychology, Jesus makes no fruitless effort to explain, but changes the conversation to a subject more intimately related to her moral and mental life.

By a request relating to her sinful life, Jesus calls forth her conscience in the conscientious reply, I have no husband. He accepts her answer as true to fact and true to her own best knowledge of her past. When Jesus relates facts of her marital relations, which she accepts as true, He has evidently entered the realm of her real life, and she in turn enters the realm of His life. She thinks with Him at some points at least. She begins to know Him well enough to assert that He is a prophet. Her first thought of Him was that He was not greater than Jacob, who gave them this well, and whom she claims as father. Now her conception has changed, and she propounds a vexed question in religion, at least for her people, where men ought to worship God. The question is not altogether theoretical, but has for her a personal and practical interest, since

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her religious views, like her religious life, are not altogether satisfactory to her.

Jesus does not answer her as a Jew would answer, nor yet as a Gentile, but as a man whose ideas and ideals are universal, so that when He addresses that one woman at the well, He is, in fact, speaking to all the world. He speaks as we might expect Him to speak Whom John introduced at the very beginning of his Gospel. He speaks as One who fully appreciates man's need of fundamental truth. How could He deceive the human mind, betray human reason, or mock the human heart? How could He dismiss an honest inquirer unsatisfied? How could He awaken a soul to its deepest needs without a personality capable of satisfying them?

His answer comes in terms of mind and heart and spirit, and not in terms of time and place. Place, however sacred, can never be the chief thing in worship. Men look here and there, and thus lose the way into the soul-life with all it signifies concerning the sense of God and the service of God. The viewpoint of Jesus is not that of the Jew versus that of the Samaritan, for He stands in the open and declares what all men should know, that the worship of God is the worship of the Father. This is a definite statement which comes closer to us. The object of worship among the Jews revealed Himself, but no revelation of God was ever made to the Samaritan people. Salvation comes from the Jews in the course of their history. He Who is the truth never fails to recognize the truth, whatever its form, promise or prophecy, history or personality.

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He loves the wholeness of truth, fresh and vital, and unmingled with error, and offers it to one and all when He declares that true worship now and henceforth is spiritual because the nature of God requires it. God is a Spirit, and worship must harmonize with Him as its fundamental fact. His worshipers must worship Him in accordance with His nature, and hence they must worship in spirit and in truth. Mere external or formal worship lacks the elements of truth and reality because it fails to appreciate the object or express the subject since both are spiritual, and only on this basis can they meet in this act of mutual recognition. The hour has come when God has been revealed as a Spirit, and hence He must be worshiped as such.

Neither Jesus nor John finds any occasion for defining the word spirit, but both use it as a term directly understood in individual life and personal experience. The invisible, immaterial self, the self-conscious, self-determining being that knows itself as I and other beings thus constituted as Thou—this being knows itself as a spirit, individual and unitary, and has therefore the basis for the knowledge of God as a Spirit. As a spirit, God is a Personal Being Who has given to each creature who bears His image, a genuine copy of Himself in the self-conscious and self-determining powers which characterize the human person, and thus fits man to know God and worship Him acceptably. God is not conditioned by a body, needs no local dwelling place, and no material offerings. His claim is met when man prostrates his spirit before the Divine Spirit.



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God is not unknowable to man, since man holds the key to the knowledge of God as a Spirit. Hence, both Jesus and John use the conception as one whose content already exists in the ordinary mind.

The breadth of mind and sympathy which we may call the universality of Jesus, has had its effect upon this Samaritan woman. It has lifted her out of her narrow, local prejudice and personal limitations. She has followed as best she could the teaching of Jesus and has no further question to ask. Her doubt has been met, and now she expresses her faith in the coming of the Messiah and His ability to teach all needed truth. This wayward woman has a personal creed and longs to lean on some one who can satisfactorily answer her deepest spiritual needs. Jesus claims at once to be the Messiah, Whom this woman at once accepts with all the ardor of her nature. She is quickly dominated by the new knowledge and enlisted in the new life. Doubt has departed and faith has its full power in an undivided heart. She becomes a witness to her people, by whose voice of testimony they were won to Jesus as the Savior of the world.

"The one thought that fills her mind," says Rev. James G. Vose, "and gives a glow and fascination to her report that cannot be resisted is what He told her of herself, . . . 'All that ever I did'; not some things merely. . . . Jesus reveals to us the hidden life. He enters our consciousness and becomes another self within us." His profound psychology touches the depths of the soul and sweeps easily to the very heights of its aspiration. It is

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the psychology of sin on the one hand and the psychology of salvation on the other, reminding us of the omnipresence and omniscience of God, as set forth in the 139th Psalm:

"O Jehovah, Thou hast searched me and known me.  
Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising;  
Thou understandest my thought afar off."

As a witness for Jesus in the little city of Sychar, this woman describes Him as a man; a man whom they are invited to come to see, a man who revealed to her all her past. Personal knowledge and personal experience always have the accent of conviction and the emphasis of assurance. Her own mind holds its answer to her own question, Is this the Christ? while her people offer theirs by coming, believing, and asserting on their own account that He is the Savior of the world. Such He must be in order to lift men in two short days out of their narrow prejudices into such breadth of thought and conception that called for a life and conduct corresponding thereto. The outcome of this conversation at the well leaves nothing to be desired. It satisfies His hearers and even Himself. He came to them as the Messiah, and they received Him as such, for no partial acceptance can satisfy the mind and heart or work a perfect salvation.

We have seen Jesus from a new angle and in a new light. When He reveals Himself, He also reveals God. According to His conception, God is a Spirit, and hence the idea of worship is the idea of communion with God, and the method is summed up in its genuineness and its spirituality. Man is a

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spirit also, and he can never know this fact in its full significance and its perennial promise except as it opens his whole being to the influence of the divine. Jesus leads men Godward, and hence His leadership is real and in the right direction. He would have men enter into the teaching of this conversation and appreciate the divine presence and omnipresence. As a Spirit, God is present to the man who worships Him in spirit and in truth. Not place and time, but the presence of God should impress the mind of the worshiper. Thus Jesus forever teaches us and forever manifests Himself as the Messiah to the heart that is ready to accept Him and rejoice in His universality as the Savior of the world. The most unlikely person can be enlightened and spiritualized and Christianized. The religious teacher awakens conscience and leads inquirers into the moral realm, for unreality in religion can never satisfy the mind, however it may be supported by custom or tradition. The soul awakened cries out for God, the living God, and every earnest inquirer and every true worshiper finds his heart interpreted in the poet's prayer,

"Beyond the sacred page  
I seek Thee, Lord ;  
My spirit pants for Thee,  
O Living Word."

Men need to know the nature of true worship and God as a Spirit, since worship is an activity of every normal mind and the knowledge of God is essential in this personal approach to Him. Unintelligent worship cannot be satisfactory to an intelli-

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gent worshiper or an intelligent God. Jesus, therefore, enlightens men on a subject so closely related to their religious life as we might have expected, but contrary to our expectation He addressed His great words to a wayward woman. "It is strange," says Principal Fairbairn, "that Christ should often speak His most remarkable words to the least remarkable persons. Here is a woman, who, for one splendid moment, emerges from the unknown, stands as in a blaze of living light, and then vanishes into the unknown again. But while she stands, she is immortalized; the moment becomes one Eternal Now, in which Christ and she face each other forever, He giving and she receiving truths the world can never allow to die."

The knowledge of God as a Spirit, with all this implies, is essential to all men, however low they may stand in the scale of intelligence, education, and culture, or however high they may rise. Without this knowledge they cannot understand the nature of true worship either as an inner impulse or as a direct demand of Deity. They cannot know themselves in the principal relation of their lives. They cannot worship with freedom. No wonder Jesus takes up this great theme and unfolds it once for all. No wonder John records His words of instruction and inspiration. No wonder all men feel that they have a personal interest in this knowledge. Jesus uncovers the soul's deepest need and then provides for its complete satisfaction. In the light of the great truth He has just announced He declares Himself as the promised Messiah, the spirit-

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ual Liberator, and the spiritual Leader. If we know God we will also know His Christ, and if we know Christ, we will know God in that same measure. The Messiah comes to make God known to men. He never hides God as though He were spiritually opaque. Like a lens, He brings God closer to the seeing eye. By His teaching, His conduct, His character, His personality, He impresses men with the knowledge of God as a Spirit; He shows them that they can worship Him according to His essential nature; He appeals to them to be true and spiritual at the center and in that particular form of activity we call worship in order that they may be true and spiritual in all other forms of human activity. The true worshiper must bear some real resemblance to the object of his adoration and his life must, in some real sense, harmonize and even blend with the life of God.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE OMNIPRESENCE OF JESUS.

As a special lesson to His disciples and in answer to their request, "Rabbi, eat," Jesus teaches them, at the well where He had just taught the Samaritan woman that God is a Spirit, that His bodily wants are secondary and His spiritual life and service are primary. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to accomplish His work." He never counteracts the force of His teaching or weakens its meaning by His conduct. He points to the ever-present harvest of souls. He asserts that the reaper receives wages and gathers fruit unto eternal life. He sees that the sower and the reaper come close enough to each other to rejoice together, while each fulfills his particular task and each has his part in the great work of redemption. As His disciples, they are sent to enter into the labor of others and complete these spiritual ministries, and therefore they must begin to read their duty in terms of spiritual life and service.

The closing paragraph of the fourth chapter of our Gospel assumes the doctrine of the divine presence and omnipresence of Jesus, just as the opening paragraph asserts the divine presence and omnipresence of God. Both spring from the same root, for Jesus is a Spirit as God is a Spirit, and this fact

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must necessarily appear in the life of our Lord. It cannot be concealed, but must show in act and teaching and even be intentionally manifested by One Whose purpose is self-revelation.

When a nobleman comes to Him in Cana and asks Him to come to Capernaum and heal his Son, Jesus knows what is needed in the home in Capernaum and provides for it as effectively as though He were there. The exercise of His divine power to heal is not limited by His bodily presence. If He apparently acts in absentia, He really acts only where He is. His Person, like His power, is in no sense unreal. Hence we are led to conclude that His power over disease in this case points primarily to His omnipresence, and secondarily, to His deity.

The nobleman found Jesus in Cana, where he made request in behalf of his sick son, who lay in Capernaum, twenty miles away. For an ordinary physician, one mile would be as great a barrier as twenty, if it prevents his seeing his patient or even sending a remedy to him. Distance effectually bars a physician's agency under such circumstances. Not so with Jesus, the great Physician, Who treats both body and spirit, and with equal skill. Without medicine as a remedy, without sending a staff to lay upon the diseased body, without any visible means of healing, He heals and brings at once the desired restoration to health. Not even the reassuring presence and words of the returning father produce the effect, for the healing occurs when the word is spoken in Cana, before the father had

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turned his face homeward or had opportunity to communicate with his family.

The nobleman had overcome the distance when he found Jesus and made his request, "Come and heal my son." Distance was in the account, "Come"; time also, "ere my child die"; likewise death, "for he was at the point of death." So also distance, time, and death are to be reckoned with and overcome by Jesus. Once more the nobleman finds something to overcome; first, his own doubt when his faith is challenged, then the distance separating him from his family, and lastly, the time required to travel that distance. As this man proved equal to his task, so Jesus proved equal to His.

By way of instruction, Jesus said to the nobleman, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe." Faith was possible and in place without these testimonials, which are entirely subordinate and secondary. A personal knowledge of Jesus should be primary and satisfactory to any man. His presence and His teaching were enough to awaken faith in Him.

The urgent appeal of the nobleman and the father is his only reply. He asks immediate action and received just what he asks, though the answer is not the exact counterpart of his request. Jesus said unto him, "Go thy way; thy son liveth." He does not "come down," but heals without His apparent presence and personal mediation. "The man believed the word that Jesus spake unto him" and went his way. His conduct is the exact counterpart of Jesus' action. His faith is genuine as it is



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brought into comparison with, and as it is tested by, the command of Jesus.

In his deep distress, the nobleman might have said, "I will not go down alone, I will not go without you." Jesus might have replied, "I have told you your son is restored and there is no need of My going with you." "Yes, but I came to get you to come down and heal my son." "No, my friend, you came to get your son healed, and I have told you this is done." "But how can you heal there when you are here?" "It is divine healing you ask, for you have already exhausted human help." "Yes, only divine help can bring relief." "Then go, for God works where He wills to work, and there also I work. I am there as well as here. The divine will produces its effects according to the divine word, even as the sun in the material world has a sort of omnipresence, silently ministering across millions of miles to the life of that little flower that blooms in beauty at your feet."

The nobleman showed his faith in the deity of Jesus by asking help of Him when all human help had failed, and by accepting healing in His apparent absence. His faith moved him to act with no other support than the word of Jesus and his own personal knowledge of Him. This was the faith required of him as the recipient of the healing word of Jesus.

When the servant met him on his return journey and told him of the restoration of his son, the nobleman assured himself that the recovery took place at the same hour Jesus said to him, "Thy son liveth." Once more we are told that this man be-

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lieved, with the added fact that his whole family attained to a like faith. His was an intelligent faith, springing from the perception of a spiritual fact and from a sincere desire to know the whole truth in the case. His was a communicable faith, a faith that others could share with the same interest and effect. An active intellect associated with an honest will may come to Christ in distress, but the one who thus comes to Him will not leave Him without winning a spiritual victory.

Can we imagine this nobleman searching for and finding a different explanation of this event? Can we think of him saying, "Perhaps the spoken word of Jesus and the healing of my son were merely coincident, but not really related as cause and effect"? Perhaps the disease was just at the crisis, and a change for the better would have taken place under any circumstances and without any assistance. Perhaps the case had just reached the turning point where the forces of nature reasserted themselves so that healing was a natural consequence.

If we imagined all this, it would all be entirely imaginary and in no sense real. The nobleman followed reason as far as reason went, and from that point he followed faith, not as the contradiction of reason, not as a narrow conclusion of the intellect or an abnormal act of the will, but as the gathering of the whole man into conscious unity in order to invoke and then receive the help of God.

"The *man* believed," John tells us, apparently losing sight of the nobleman and seeing only the father, the person who makes his appeal to Jesus

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for divine help and who believes in Jesus as a divine Person. His rank and office and honor add nothing in his approach to Christ. Men approach God as men when they come at their best and when they win His favor. This man accepted Jesus' way as a substitute for his own—Jesus remains in Cana while the sick son is healed in Capernaum. He accepted the philosophical implication that Jesus can act where He is not, or that He is where He does not appear to be, or in other words, that His power and presence are essentially divine. In this faith he receives all he really asks and is confirmed as a believer by his own experience. He has become more than he was through this brief interview with Jesus. His mind has developed by contact with another mind that has proved itself greater in every way, and the submission and subordination of his will gave opportunity to the greater Will to express Itself in calm command that contains no touch of impatience and no tone of violence; while yet It works with mighty power and brings again the freshness of youth to the blanched cheek of the dying boy. The appearance and the words of Jesus remind us of a man, but his power and presence—these belong to God. Any man who knows Jesus knows Him thus: His humanity and His deity, definite and distinct, yet associated and inseparable, as the poet has said:

“Who shall draw the mystic line,  
Which is human, which divine?”

The problem solved in this paragraph is a problem in psychology. Faith is shown to be the condition

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of Jesus' action as well as the condition of the man's receiving His help. Men find difficulty in bringing their wills into submission so that God's will may take command. What men lack is not strength, but will, the will that harmonizes with God's will. They lack just what Jesus said He had, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." When this lack was supplied, why should not the father's prayer be answered and the restoration of his son follow according to the will of Jesus, as expressed in His word? Would any other means or media of action aid our reason, our imagination, or even our faith?

Distance presented no obstacle to Jesus in this instance, and shall we not infer that the individual case establishes the general truth? Does He not desire us to make this very inference? His apparent absence is only apparent, and should never cause us to doubt His real presence. He acts where He *is*, and He *is* where He acts. His presence, like His power, transcends all human bounds and all ordinary limitations of life.

Nor is His knowledge thus limited. He surely knows something of the one He heals, and His knowledge, like His power and His presence, is directly given and not mediated through another intelligence or another will. His knowledge is divine knowledge as His power is divine power and His presence divine presence. As divine, His presence is omnipresence, just as the presence of God has been shown to be in the opening paragraph of this fourth chapter of our Gospel, and for the very same reason. God is a Spirit, and so also is Jesus, Whose

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invisible presence and unseen power bring healing to the wasted body of the dying boy, and whisper their gentle recall in the ear of the departing spirit.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE DIVINE SONSHIP OF JESUS.

The wise man who becomes the advocate of a cause and the representative of a doctrine, undertakes to prove no more than the case requires, lest his argument be weakened by an extra burden, and lest he be exposed to the attack of an opponent. He may even rest content with assuming and asserting less than the truth in order to lessen the burden of proof and in order to avoid arousing personal prejudice and successful opposition. The man who claims to be the advocate of a divine cause and a divine doctrine, and who claims to be a divine person, cannot assume this attitude toward the truth or adopt this method of self-protection. His viewpoint is central, and he must stand out in the open with no wall at His back. He stands for the truth in its essence and its entirety, and to do less or more at the behest of practical wisdom, would discredit His human sincerity and His divine character. His viewpoint is that of God Himself, and He must declare the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, however hard it may be for men to accept, however sure it is to cross and contradict traditional teaching, however severely it may test human reason or try religious faith.

According to the fifth chapter of the Gospel of John, Jesus is led to declare Himself as the Son of

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God, primarily in self-revelation and secondarily in self-defense. His declaration met with immediate opposition on the part of the Jerusalem Jews. If we are inclined to ask why He thus declares Himself to men who proved to be His enemies, let us remember that He is the truth and cannot compromise or deny Himself. Let us consider also that the whole truth is a safer citadel than any part of it, and the whole truth is more commanding to any candid mind. On His own theory, His act of healing, with all its accessories, is perfectly explained, and the only real point in question is this, Can men accept Him as the Son of God? According to the prevailing idea of the Jewish people of that age, the Messiah, when He came, would not be a divine Person. Their charge of blasphemy was not lodged against Him because He asserted that He was the Messiah, but because of the other claim that He was the Son of God. When we consider their thought of the Messiah, we see how empty of value it is. A Christ of human conception would be useless and irrational if not also impossible. Such a person would be no more than a human leader, like the false Messiahs of subsequent ages, and the only aid he could really render would be to drive us back to the historic Christ, Who was sent of God and Who came to reveal God.

To Jesus, truth must be an organic whole, and therefore incapable of a partial and imperfect presentation. Part belongs to part, and every part completes and explains every other. As an organic whole, truth possesses a self-evidencing power. It

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satisfies the reason and demands the acceptance of the will. The knowledge of the least truth, or rather, the least knowledge of truth, leads on to the knowledge of the greatest. The supposed violation of the Sabbath law by carrying a bed at the command of Jesus opens the discussion that issues in showing that the truth concerning the law lies ultimately in the divine authority, based on the divine Sonship of Jesus.

How can we reasonably expect Jesus so to present truth as to avoid conflict with error? Jesus does not hold truth in a passive and negative way, but positively and actively. Men who devote themselves to error and evil are not passive, but positive and even pugnacious. They claim the right to be left alone to work their own will, which practically means the right to exclude truth and righteousness, or at least impose a certain limitation upon them. When Jesus actively advocated righteousness in opposition to unrighteousness, when He faithfully followed the truth up into its higher altitudes, when He declared the whole truth as the right thing to think and do, and withal the most rational, we are convinced of the necessity of declaring the doctrine of His own divine Sonship, which gathered in one all the questions at issue and offered the only rational solution of the problem before them.

The brief historic statement which forms the opening of the fifth chapter, introduces the doctrinal discussion that continues to the close. The sad condition of the man who had remained in the bonds of his infirmity for thirty-eight years, the supposedly



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supernatural means by which he hoped to be healed, and his confessed inability to make use of the means when the opportunity arose, bring to him immediate healing by the spoken word of Jesus. Perhaps no record of the event would ever have been made had not this miracle of healing precipitated a discussion of Sabbath observance, and this in turn called forth the question of the character of Jesus and His real relation to God. Step by step He develops the doctrine of a divine Teacher Who traces His origin and Who declares His filial relation to God, the Father. In the earlier part of the discussion He speaks of Himself in the third person, but in the latter part He adopts the first person, "I can of myself do nothing; as I hear, I judge," with no abatement of His meaning and no change in His mind.

The sick man is accorded healing in an unexpected way. The word of Jesus contains greater power than the troubled waters, and has the additional advantage of being at once available. Jesus quietly commands the sick man to act like a well man. Of course, His command implies His co-operation, for the will of Jesus is in His word while the sick man exerts his will in his own behalf. A mental cause here produces both a mental and a physical effect. No physical agency appears in the case, and we know no parallel except in the creative acts that originate in the divine will.

The man obeys the command of Jesus by doing what he could not do before the command was given. The command must have brought with it

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the ability to comply, for the infirmity was no mere mental delusion. He was made "whole," and no doubt arises in any mind with reference to the result, but only concerning the Person Who produced it. The miracle was acknowledged without question at that time, though in after ages some have denied the miracle and discredited the witnesses who saw and accepted it.

This miracle of healing was performed on the Sabbath day, perhaps intentionally by Jesus, or it may be only in the ordinary course of His life and work. A reformer finds himself under the hard necessity of correcting false conceptions and artificial customs, however old or widely accepted. The Jewish teaching respecting the Sabbath rested securely upon the law according to common consent, and hence the Jews said, "It is the sabbath, and it is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed." His ready reply satisfied his mind but not theirs. "He that made me whole the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk." Inquiry brings out the identity of his Healer, and thus the issue is clearly drawn between Jesus and the Jews. The Jews expect the man who comes as God's representative not to violate the Sabbath law as they interpret it. They reason that such violation discredits any man who claims a divine mission. The man who was healed reasoned differently. It must be lawful to carry his bed on the Sabbath because the man who healed him commanded him to do this, and because in the very act of obedience his healing came. He

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who heals by divine power must assuredly command by divine authority.

There is no conflict in the divine nature. Divine power is exercised only in harmony with divine authority and divine wisdom. The kingdom of God shows no internal cleavage. The law of God, in its true interpretation, reflects the inner life of the true servant of God. If some correction must be made to harmonize men in the kingdom and with the divine will, the correction belongs to the former and not to the latter. The Jews take issue with Jesus, and propose to correct but not to be corrected. They place the law, the greatest thing they know, across the path of the reformer. They cannot expect to meet Him successfully or bar His progress without some weapon equal to the occasion. In the popular estimate, He is greater than they, but may not the law prove to be greater than He? Is not the law divine in its origin, its majesty, and its might? Shall they not employ it against Him? Shall they not invoke its power?

Jesus finds the man and warns him to sin no more lest a worse thing befall him. Sin brings affliction as one of its consequences, and also as one of its corrections, that the evil path may appear evil. But sin shows that a man is wrong at the center, wrong in his choice of a leader, and as a necessary consequence, wrong in his interpretation of law and life, of man and his duty, of God and His representatives. The moral danger of the man who was healed may be reflected by his ready and perhaps unkind report to the Jews as to the identity of his

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benefactor, which incites the Jews to begin their process of persecution in self-defense and self-vindication.

If the teaching of Jesus is really fundamental, it must deal with the great facts and principles of religion and life, and develop the great doctrines by which the mind conceives them and constructs them in a rational system. Hence His frequent challenge of friend and foe to higher thinking and truer conceptions of God and man. We naturally suppose that He only makes His task harder for Himself when, in His reply to the Jews, He raises the question of His personal relation to God, Whom He calls "My Father," and with Whom He associates Himself in the purposeful activity of work. "My Father worketh even until now, and I work." If the Son does all the Father does, He must be almighty, omniscient, everywhere present, and, in short, must possess all the attributes of God. These religionists readily conclude that Jesus makes Himself equal with God when He deliberately calls "God His own Father," and associates Himself with God in His work. They are right in their inference, and Jesus at once proceeds to justify His statement as true to fact, not by modification or retraction, but by free discussion of the divine and human relations of His life. He sets forth his relation to God, the Father, in three different ways.

First, the divine Sonship of Jesus appears in His relation to the Father, which is plainly personal, as shown in several aspects. The Father is the one example for the Son, governing His acts, forming

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His ideals, re-enforcing His will, so that "the Son can do nothing of Himself." Yet whatsoever things the Father doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner. His deeds are like the works of God, not mere imitations, but products of a Being in absolute harmony with God. Then, also, the Father loves the Son and shows Him all His works, ever greater and more wonderful, a mark and manifestation of personal life and relation. The Father even shares with the Son the power to raise the dead and to bestow life upon them. As regards judgment, a right which belongs to God alone, there is a complete transfer, "He hath given all judgment unto the Son," a function that is fundamental in moral government and universal in its scope. The reason assigned for this transfer of function and authority is "that all may honor the Son even as they honor the Father," which unmistakably means that He shall have the honor due to God. The equal honor argues an equal claim to Deity in the just judgment of God. Such are these divine measurements of Jesus. Such are the terms in which Jesus sets forth His personal relation to the Father. Such are the responsibilities to which He must respond.

Second, the deity of Jesus appears also in His relation to men, a relation that covers their future as well as their present life and activity, that illustrates His divine Sonship in the field of human experience.

Any man who hears the word of Jesus and believes on Him Who sent Jesus, has life of the eternal kind, and, having passed out of death into

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life, comes not into judgment. Thus He stands related to living men, who are able to benefit by this relation. He is related to the dead, the spiritually dead, for they shall hear the voice of the Son of God and they that hear shall live. For the Son is a source of life, even as the Father, Who has given to Him this divine power and also the authority to execute judgment, the authority over life in all its developments, whether evil or good. Even those who are in the tombs shall hear His voice and obediently come forth in order to take up a kind of life that corresponds with their character. "The Son giveth life to whom He will," which offers evidence that there is no limit to His life-giving power. He exercises judgment as a necessary part of His work of salvation. Thus He becomes the one source of spiritual life and the one seat of judgment, and to suppose that there is another source and another seat, is contrary to reason.

The relation of Jesus to men, as set forth by Himself, reflects His deity in its essence and in its outline, and if we are disposed to admit His premises, we come to His conclusion in the ordinary course of our thought. His relation to the believer, to the spiritually dead, to all men as the source of life, over which He exercises authority in all its forms of development, to the dead whom He shall call forth and judge, corresponds with no ordinary human relation, but plainly involve His higher nature.

When He proposes to lift men to a higher level of life, He makes it possible for them to test His words

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by their own faith. He enters the sphere of personal experience, where every man has the opportunity and the means of satisfying his own mind. He can assure himself that he is dealing with a divine Person Who exercises divine power in his own individual interest and with reference to his own personal need. We concede that God only has power over death. He alone can recall the dead. He alone has life in Himself and authority to execute judgment. His authority is that of the law and the judge who applies the law in each individual case, deciding where the law may not appear explicit and interpreting it by its principle and its purpose. He alone can speak to the dead with an authority they will acknowledge. If He is related to all men as the Son of man, He is related to them also as the Son of God, a spiritual relation that contains spiritual ministries and that is without parallel in human thought and history.

Third, the divine Sonship of Jesus appears no less plainly in His own character and conduct. His judgment is righteous because it rests ultimately on the will of God. So also must we regard Him as righteous who holds Himself in harmony with the divine will. Righteousness is an attribute of His being, and is offered by Him in proof of His Sonship.

His harmony with the divine will is essential and absolute, and not merely assumed and external, so that His testimony respecting Himself is true. He requires the witness of another than John, whose testimony rested on his own personal knowledge

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and had as its object to aid men to believe—a witness that is not from men, that is greater than that of John, that is manifestly divine, being the direct witness of God, the Father. He points to His works, not as standing to His credit alone, but as being done by divine appointment, and so attesting the fact that the Father had sent Him and that He remained in harmony with God in His absolute Personality. Such is His interpretation of His works, and the man who rejects this interpretation should offer some other theory by which to explain them, and with them the conduct and the character of the Christ. He refers to the oral testimony of the Father, given at His baptism, which His present auditors may not have heard. He reminds His hearers that they had not seen the divine form because they lacked the faith that makes possible the vision of God. Even the Scriptures fail to reveal God to men who cannot find Jesus Christ in these divinely-inspired writings.

Jesus lives and labors on the divine plane and not only on the human. He does not receive glory of men and thereby condition His thought and life. He has no tendency to modify His higher life by reason of the lower. Unlike Him, His Jewish hearers lack the love of God and hence cannot see God anywhere, not even in the Christ Whom God has sent, nor indeed in the Scriptures by the most careful search. They have lost God. They have forfeited the spiritual viewpoint. Coming in the Father's name, Jesus is rejected, but if another comes in his own name, he will be received by them.



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These two mental states and moral results are diverse, contradictory, and mutually exclusive.

These Jews are centered too low. They fall short of the divine in human life. Their supreme relation rises no higher than citizens of this world, and thus their relation to God is virtually vacated. Their desire for honor from one another prevents faith in Jesus, and the closely related duty of seeking glory from God. They are mistaken in regarding Jesus as their accuser before the Father, but will eventually discover that Moses occupies that office, for the man who really believes Moses, must, as a logical consequence, believe Jesus, of whom Moses wrote. No line of separation can be laid between Christ and Moses except in their thought and theory.

The righteousness of Jesus, as a divine attribute, is thus vindicated by Him in connection with His personal relation to men, as here explained, and on the basis of His relation to the Father within the circle of the divine life. His divine Sonship is plainly implied and fairly affirmed. It becomes the explanation of His power to heal a man whose infirmity had clung to him for thirty-eight years, an infirmity which is removed by His word of command, spoken on that memorable Sabbath day. It becomes the foundation on which rests His right to direct the restored man's conduct, contrary to Jewish custom and Jewish interpretation of the law.

There can be no conflict in the divine nature or in the kingdom of God. God's authority, as set forth in His law, cannot be pitted against God's power as manifested in acts of healing through the

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agency of Jesus. Truth is consistent and the kingdom one, because both are divinely constituted. Jesus is not in conflict with Moses or the law, while these Jews are plainly in conflict with both, and hence also with Jesus. Their conception of the law and their attitude toward Moses make faith in Jesus impossible. The development of His doctrine only adds to His original statement, "My Father worketh even until now and I work," and, no doubt, added at each step to the displeasure of the Jews, who sought more and more to take His life as the only means of vindicating themselves and upholding their conclusion.

Throughout this argument, Jesus nowhere modifies His statement, but only explains it by expanding it. He presents it from three different angles. He knows the difficulty of the Jews in accepting it, and states that difficulty in plain terms, but knows no way to make truth easier or more palatable to them. The Jews take His words in earnest, evidently knowing what Jesus means and yet knowing no rules of interpretation by which to explain away the force of His argument or directly to answer it when backed up by an undisputed exercise of divine power.

In the popular mind and even in the minds of these Jews, Jesus has won His argument. His personal relation to God, the Father, explains His power to heal, and with it His use of the Sabbath, His conception of the law, and His amazing assertions respecting Himself. If we admit this primal, personal relation, we can easily understand how He

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can be all He represents Himself to be. No wise man asserts more than he is able to prove. Even the weak points of a case may be surrendered to advantage, as the practice of Abraham Lincoln demonstrated, just in order to win a verdict on the essential points of the case. But Jesus finds no weak points in His case, which He feels called upon to surrender. All are strong alike, for all center in His own Person. He comes from God, honors His divine origin, and maintains His filial relation to the Father. When He manifests Himself, He manifests the Father. He declares Himself to the Jews and demands acceptance on His merits. His later claims never fall below His earlier representations respecting Himself. He cannot be disregarded, for He has entered human life and thought and history. He is a fact of no ordinary significance. The proof He offers in support of His theory of His own life sustains His Divine Sonship within the compass of human conception, human reason, and the experiences of human life.

No real resting-place can be found for human reason or the human will except in the divine Sonship of Jesus, nor is there any safer or saner way to secure the assent of the human mind than by the plain presentation of this great truth, which cannot be reduced to something less or changed to something else. The knowledge of the Christ in Himself and in His relation to God, the Father, is the prime element of all knowing, whether it be in the realm of the cosmic order, the moral law, spiritual life, or spiritual agencies. Only on this basis of life

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and knowledge can we rightly interpret the law of the Sabbath, or any other law, and really estimate aright the value of the religious life. The Son of God gives to both a definite, rational, and divinely real content.

If we accept the divine Sonship of Jesus in advance and take at once the viewpoint of our Lord, His method and His conclusion appear to our minds to be both natural and necessary. If He is sent by God, shall He not think and act accordingly? If He came to reveal God to men, shall He falter or fail or perchance neglect His opportunity for fear of giving offense? If, indeed, He is the Son of God, shall He not make Himself known as such and reveal Himself in His true character? For Him, His conclusion is no more than His thesis awaiting its development, and He is at the end just what He was at the beginning. Men only are enlightened and changed by His argument. They are enabled to see as the Christ sees, at least, during that period when the mind of Christ illuminates their own. They are invited to take their stand with Him and occupy a central viewpoint from which to obtain an insight into law and life and from which to comprehend in the compass of their own thought, the divine Sonship of Jesus as the only key to His conduct and His character.

## CHAPTER X.

### CHRIST AND CREATION.

Our author naturally notes the points at which Jesus transcends human ability, the established order of nature, and the unseen realm of man's inner life. He describes our Lord as He acts freely within these limits and then as freely rises above them, thus giving us an impressive view of His essential greatness. John gives us, in this connection, a view of Christ and creation not in the contrast of an atom and a world, or of a man and a universe, but in the close connection of cause and effect, superiority and subordination, supremacy and dependence. Christ is greater than creation as spirit is more than matter, and in personality rises above all other forms of existence. Mind is the master of multitude and magnitude. The civil engineer computes his task of construction and then he completes it. The astronomer measures the distance of the planets and even the stars. The soloist sings for a thousand as easily as a hundred, and the great general commands ten thousand or a hundred thousand. If, according to its capacity, the human mind possesses such power, how much more the mind of God.

Step by step we are led to consider Christ; first, as a superhuman being, doing what man cannot do; second, as supernatural, doing what the laws of nature ordinarily forbid; and, third, as spiritual in

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the highest and best sense, doing what religious leaders of all ages have failed to accomplish. He is simply supreme in the realm of spiritual life and offers to all men the satisfaction of their spiritual natures. Thus, according to John's grouping, Christ appears over against all the world and all humanity, not forgetting the fact and problem of evil. In the midst of nature, with its well-defined laws, among men, with their needs of body, mind, and spirit, in the presence of evil with all its power over free beings, He rises superior to all and supreme over all. No wonder, when others were departing and Jesus inquires of His disciples, Would ye also go away? Peter honestly answers, To whom shall we go? There is no other rational conclusion to such a course of thinking. Nor need we entertain the fear that we are transcending our Gospel or reading into its pages what is not there when we remember that the fourth Gospel was the last to be written, and that the Apostle John made the last contribution to the sacred canon, and therefore his Gospel presupposes, in some sense, all that has gone before.

Superiority of Christ is here shown in three different ways: First, in the field of human action; second, in the realm of nature; and third, in the domain of mind. Christ accomplishes what no man could achieve under like conditions. He exercises a control over nature that man has never equalled. He undertakes to supply man's spiritual needs above and beyond the temporary provision made by Moses, the great religious leader of the earlier economy.

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Jesus necessarily takes the initiative in self-revelation as opportunity offers to reach the minds of the people. While feeding the multitude He appears among them as superhuman; while walking on the water He becomes to them supernatural; while He teaches them that He is the bread of life He is spiritual. Easily above men and above nature, He opens the way into the spiritual where He properly dwells and where men properly belong.

John reads and records the mind of the multitude in one brief sentence, they "followed Him because they beheld the signs which He did on them that were sick." The mental state of the one had become the mental state of the many under the same influence which here has its popular measure and shows its effect on the popular mind. The multitude failed to assimilate the great truth of the divine Sonship of Jesus and dwelt upon the manifestations of His power rather than the revelations of His Person.

Evidently the sign was more to the people than the healing. It indicated the presence of divine power with the possibility of further manifestations. This multitude was able to read the evidence already offered, if not properly prepared to appreciate the argument and the conclusion which followed the healing of the man whose infirmity had bound him for thirty-eight years. The exercise of divine power in their very presence by a Person Who freely associated with them quickly caught the attention of the people. They understood this sign language and felt the force of its meaning for them, even when

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they were not candidates for healing. There were no spectators; all were personally interested, and their mental movement was generally in the right direction and toward the right conclusion. But men who shared the benefit of Jesus' power and saw the sign are yet able, the very next day, to revert to the bread as the more important of the two. Quick degeneracy compelled Jesus to correct this reversionary tendency by open rebuke. "Ye seek Me not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves and were filled." Their first mental movement is upward, but on second thought it changes to a downward direction. They are willing to sell their birthright and be dependents for the sake of an easy living, while Jesus seeks to lift their thoughts and relate these people to Himself in spiritual life. How can He lift them to His own level and then keep them there? As we consider the feeding of the five thousand, we will find the answer of Him Who works with equal ease in the kingdom of the spiritual and the realm of the material, and uses the latter to point His lessons in the former.

In the feeding of the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, Jesus rises above the level of the human and appears superhuman, not in the sense of the heroic, but in the sense of the divine. The miracle is more than a man's work, even if the man be a great man. It bears us into the realm of the divine, where divine power inevitably links itself in our thoughts with the divine presence.



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Jesus carefully cultivates the higher thinking of His disciples when He inquires about procuring bread to satisfy the multitude. He suggests the ordinary means of buying it, but asks, Whence? This question is answered by Philip, to whom it was addressed, and then by Andrew, who must have felt that Philip's estimate led to no practical course of action, and lastly by Jesus, according to the measures of His own mind. Philip counts the cost and names a sum that looks prohibitively large for them to spend, and equally small to supply bread for such a multitude. Andrew tells of a lad who has five loaves and two fishes, but confesses at once the inadequacy of such a supply. While he is looking in the right direction, he seems to see nothing Jesus saw. His disciples have not learned to read His mind when it is thrown open to them, or to anticipate His intentions which bear steadily in the direction of benevolent action.

How patent it is that Jesus must act in order to be known by men. He commands the disciples to make the people sit down. He takes the loaves and fishes, gives thanks, distributes to the disciples, and so to the people. We discover a divine recognition of His act as well as the human perception, for He always works in harmony with the will of God. A divine psychology is involved in the very nature of the case. His mind shows its relation upward to God as well as outward toward men, and His whole being finds expression in this single act, which typifies His relation to the many on the physical as well as the spiritual side of their natures.

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Thus, He feeds the multitude with the loaves and fishes, and produces an effect upon the minds of the people such as He desired, and such, also, as He dreaded. They see the result and the sign, and press to the conclusion that Jesus is the prophet that cometh into the world. He is God's spokesman, His representative, the Messiah long promised by the prophets. At once they formulate their thoughts concerning Him and define their duty toward Him. They have initiative. They know what they can do for Him. They will take Him by force and make Him king—the opposite in idea and principle of His own plan and purpose—an earthly kingdom for Jesus Christ!—force instead of love as its governing principle!—it cannot be, it must not be, and Jesus “withdrew again into the mountain alone.”

Revelation—is it a necessity?—revelation of the mind and heart of God—revelation that men may know themselves as God knows them and have initiative in harmony with His will—revelation then, and now, and always. Revelation must remain an essential of religious life while men need to know God and themselves in relation to Him, while they know life in its two aspects, physical and spiritual, and while they are tempted to exalt the lower above the higher.

Jesus was very real to the people of His own age, quite as real as they themselves. He was real to them on the level of their own life, while their difficulty was to be real on the level of His superhuman life. To adjust themselves to His aims and ideals, to be moved by His impulses and purposes, to

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breathe His spirit, to follow His example with Him ever before them, was a task beyond and above unaided human nature, and demanded a new accession of the divine. They responded to Him perhaps the best they could at that time, but His withdrawal from them shows His conception of their mental state and the need of teaching them on the following day the unlearned lesson.

The manner of Jesus' return to the company of His disciples prepares them for the lesson He proposes to teach. If He is superhuman, He is also supernatural. The laws of nature refuse to restrain Him, but rather answer in obedience to His will. He is not adrift in the cosmic order, but constitutes it and sustains it. It never contradicts Him, but harmonizes with Him, as though its supreme law was simply the expression of His own will as the center of all law and the vital principle of all life. His walking upon the water is not a matter of skill, but of will, the supernatural will, the divine will of Jesus. Man is nature's master within limits and bounds, but Jesus carries His mastery to the point of supremacy. As he walks upon the water contrary to all known natural law; as He quiets the fears of His disciples by His words of assurance, "It is I, be not afraid"; as they willingly receive Him into their boat, their minds are being prepared to receive His teaching by receiving Him. "There are no fractions in a person," says Rev. Henry S. Nash. "There are no fractions in God." The manifestations of His power are manifestations of His

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Person, "His self-knowledge, self-mastery, self-revelation."

In the age of our Lord, the common people who mingled with Him accepted His humanity without question and sought to understand His deity as the unexplained part of His being. In our own age, the common people accept the deity of Christ as being equally attested and more easily explained than His humanity. In that age there were men of the educated class who believed that Jesus was a man but not God, nor even a man who was sent by God. In this age there are men of learning who claim to accept the divinity of Jesus and then undertake to deduce it from His humanity. To them He is superhuman in the sense of heroic; supernatural in the sense of superior; spiritual within limits set by human conceptions; divine but not Deity; good but not God; mysterious but not inexplicable; a being who can be interpreted within the limits of human knowledge and natural law.

The real problem before us, however, is not the explanation of Jesus to the satisfaction of one age or another, one class or another, but the entrance of this superhuman, supernatural, and spiritual Being into the history of the race and the inner life of the individual.

When Jesus exhorts the people to work for the bread which abides unto eternal life and not for that which perishes, He reverses the course of their mental action. Their daily bread had become the chief thing to them, but now they are invited to make eternal life the thing of supreme importance.

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The temporal life must be accorded a secondary place if the eternal is to become primary in their minds and hearts. If this change is radical for them, this fact only emphasizes its practical importance. If the revelation of the mind and heart of God is a divine process, it must have its human counterpart in the minds and hearts of men. If life has different levels, then eternal life can only be known by personal experience and interpreted in terms of itself.

When Jesus speaks of Himself as the Son of man Whom the Father, even God, hath sealed, He considers Himself as having man's essential nature and standing at the head of the human race with the absolute confirmation of the Father. As thus defined, He is the source of eternal life and the object of religious faith. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent." Faith in Him gives entrance to God's kingdom, and is, therefore, the first act to be required and the greatest of which any man is capable.

With apparent freedom, the people ask for a sign to enable them to believe. What workest Thou? Their liberty in speech reaches a climax when they suggest the miraculous feeding of their fathers in the wilderness with bread from heaven as a very appropriate example for Jesus to imitate. Their suggestion savors more of physical than spiritual blessing, and hence receives less consideration. They are working out their idea on their basis of thought and life, while He is working out His idea on His basis. He is superior to popular in-

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fluence, however strong, and never suffers Himself to be hypnotized by the suggestion of another mind and the power of another will. He is superior to any man and all men, according to His own statement and the evidence derived from His own acts.

Statement is equal to argument when Jesus says, "It was not Moses that gave you the bread out of heaven." The real source then, as now, was God, and hence He adds, "but My Father giveth you the true bread out of heaven." The bread of God is really from heaven, and not merely an earth product supplied through divine agency. The relatively divine is less than the really divine, which comes from heaven and gives life to the world. Before Him are people who want something and need something, whom He wants to have something, but not what they want. Their prayer must be inspired with new meaning before it can be offered intelligently or answered in like manner.

Their immediate request for this bread reveals the fact that their minds have made no perceptible progress in grasping the teaching of Jesus. The answer of Jesus confronts them with His conception, "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to Me shall not hunger and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." He is Himself the divinely-appointed satisfaction of the human soul. Could anything be plainer? Could He in any other way lead their thoughts from the material to the spiritual? Could He better emphasize their real need to their real knowing? As Rev. Cornelius Woelfkin has said, "Every form of organic life is supported by some-

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thing external to itself. . . . Man has a three-fold life. The body is fed with chemical nutriment; the mind with thought; the spirit with God." All that men find in Christ, His human sympathy sustained by His divine love, His higher thought backed up by His perfect example, His moral purity joined with His moral courage, His spiritual life which becomes a center of spiritual light, His personality, human and divine, all are bread to them. As the bread of life, He nourishes mind and spirit and develops a man according to his normal type and with a view to his personal perfection.

This multitude which was privileged to see Jesus failed to believe on Him, failed to receive Him for what He was and is. Their own preconceived ideas still mastered their minds and prevented the exercise of faith. Hence, Jesus announces that all come to Him who are given to Him by the Father. The divine within Him attracts men, but they are, nevertheless, the gift of God to Him as He is the gift of God to them. The Father gives to Him men who will devote themselves to Him, a supernatural selection that becomes the operative principle in the Christian community. Surely no other principle would be so safe and so satisfactory to all concerned as this one which we may call the principle of divine selection.

Jesus welcomes the soul that comes to Him and reads its future in connection with His own obedience to the Father's will, which includes the salvation of the believer, his resurrection at the last day, and eternal life as his present and perpetual posses-

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sion. If He links Himself with God, the Father, He also joins the believer to God in faith and love and obedience. He opens to men the heavens out of which He has come, and invites them to enter the spiritual life.

The Jews murmured because He claimed a heavenly origin with all this signified. They trace His relationship on the human side and quite forget that the denial of the divine side left great facts unexplained and unexplainable. They fail to follow Him as He reveals the very constitution of the spiritual kingdom, and hence fail to come to His conclusion. Jesus, therefore, repeats His unlearned lesson respecting divine life and spiritual attraction, which comes within the purview of every man. The prophet anticipates this fact when he says, "They shall all be taught of God" and be required to make their own choice, not as a nation, but as individuals. The man who is God-taught will come to Jesus because Jesus is God's nearest approach to man. The Father never visualizes Himself to men, except in Him Whom He hath sent and Who "hath seen the Father" in behalf of all mankind. Their fathers ate the manna in the wilderness and died, for that was only bread for the body, but the living bread, the bread from heaven, feeds the human spirit so that "if a man eat of this bread he shall live forever."

Jesus changes His statement in reference to Himself as the bread of life so as to make the Jews' interpretation irrational and absurd. He offers His flesh and blood as the food and drink of men, by



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which they may have eternal life and become rightly related to Him and to God, the Father, the source of all life. They remain as materialistic as before. No spiritual conception enters their minds, no divine idea dawns upon their thoughts, no prophetic word enables them to catch a single glimpse of His sacrificial offering of His flesh and blood upon the cross in order that His divine life might freely flow into the channels of human personality. Their religion remains a finality for them, law and sacrifice, form and ceremony, and seems easier if not more significant than the spiritual relation to Himself and to the Father, which Jesus insistently demands. Even many of his disciples took umbrage, and many went back and walked no more with Him. This was truly a hard saying and demanded a spiritual interpretation or a complete rejection.

"Doth this cause you to stumble?" is His compassionate inquiry. What if the Son of man should ascend to heaven in your presence, would He thus be able to demonstrate His spiritual nature and convince men once for all that His message is spiritual in sense, if not in form? "It is the Spirit that giveth life." There is no material source of life. "Science is making it clear," says Rev. John Douglas Adam, "that material things have their origin in the spiritual reality behind them." Men must look to the spiritual for life, for there is no lower source. The words of Jesus are spirit and life because they are the breath of Deity. They come from a source and center of life, as has been previously shown and consistently maintained. Yet some of His own

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followers believe not; they remain unspiritualized in His presence, under His personal influence, and while enjoying His instruction. They maintain their own viewpoint and fail to adopt that of the great Teacher. But He knows the attitude of each soul toward Himself and requires no word or act to reveal the mind of believer or unbeliever. His is a divine consciousness as well as a human consciousness, opening to Him the heart of God and man. Superhuman, supernatural, and spiritual, the world of the spiritual is His, in which He lives and reigns.

Men need a divine impulse in order to come to Jesus and enter this spiritual society. Jesus exalts the divine in human life without degrading the human. He makes His appeal to men as intelligent and morally free, yet He reasserts that no man can come to Him except it be given unto him by the Father. The spiritualizing of a single soul reaches back into the will of God for its first real impulse. If the soul is ever to come to God, God must first come to that soul. If the teaching of Jesus at this point be true, as we take it to be, there is nothing further to be said with reference to the origin of spiritual life.

There must be a divine basis for a life that is to become divine and really rise to the level of the life of Jesus and so be worthy of a place among His disciples. He is not the cunning leader of mystified and mistaken men. They must claim or forfeit His company. They must act according to their own intelligence and motive and will. If the departure of many weakens the confidence of those who re-

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main, His only word to the twelve is this, "Would ye also go away? Am I attractive to you or really repellant? Read your own heart. Make your own choice." Peter is ready to answer with scarcely a single glance in search of another leader. "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that Thou art the Holy One of God."

Thus a human will responds to the divine. Thus personal knowledge and intelligent faith issue in personal confession of the co-operation of the human will with the divine Will, which results in the salvation of a human spirit. Jesus has led at least one man, and perhaps many, to the desired conclusion, the definite recognition of His deity. Some men are beginning to know Him. His argument has not been in vain. Peter's confession embodies the very points in dispute. Here, and here alone, Jesus rests His case. God can never consent to be dethroned, God in heaven or God in Jesus Christ, conversing with men and calling them into that really religious realm, where the human will responds to the divine.

If we take the confession of Peter, which expressed the conclusion to which his mind came and in which his mind really found rest, and then re-read the sixth chapter of John's Gospel, we will find no mystery, none save the deity of Christ. Peter's conception of Christ simplifies every sentence and every paragraph. It is the key that fits the lock and opens the door to spiritual life. Jesus becomes repulsive to men who have resisted the divine impulse and rejected the divine appeal, but He becomes more

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and more attractive to men who have followed that impulse and made it the beginning and the basis of a life that is spiritual, supernatural, superhuman.

When He feeds the five thousand He is creative without interfering with natural law; when He walks on the water He shows that the higher life has its higher law; when He offers Himself to men as the bread of life He points to personality as a final fact. He is related to the multitude as no mere man could be related. His viewpoint is that of humanity as a whole and that of deity from its depths. In His own Person, He centers a double consciousness as the Son of man and the Son of God. He answers the questions and aspirations of the human spirit in terms of spiritual wisdom and heavenly life because there is no enduring answer on any lower level. When He feeds men by superhuman agency and approaches them in supernatural ways and compels them to think of Him as spiritual and divine, it is that men may know Him, not as a master in argument or a mystery of power, but as the Holy One of God.

Here is One Who stands in a definite relation to creation, a relation that is real and immediate, active, and effective. He has not overlooked the presence of evil and the serious problem that awaits solution. He has not ignored it—for among His twelve associates is not one of them a devil?—but He can overrule it and cause it to serve His purpose. Thus He enters into the world and yet rises above its material forms, established laws, its highest life. Borne on the wings of John's inspired thought, we have seen

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the Christ as a preternatural Person, Who, with familiar features and benignant smile, looks down upon us from the very battlements of creation.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE MESSIAH OF PROPHECY AND THE CHRIST OF HISTORY.

The withdrawal of Jesus from Judea and from the Jews of Jerusalem who sought to take His life, and His temporary separation from His brethren who did not believe on Him, occasions a period of enforced and independent thinking, with reference to His claims and His character. Men had been thinking and had formulated their thought again and again, but their opinions were yet imperfect, lacking the deep conviction that endures the test of reflection and the opposition of those in authority. Many preferred to believe in Jesus as a private and personal matter without any clash of ideas or conflict of interests. But Christian faith must be predominant if it is to be real, which necessitates its becoming public. Jesus may be known as a religious teacher in their midst, but He must also be accepted as a spiritual force in their minds and hearts. Having found entrance there, the withdrawal of His presence from the Jews at Jerusalem and even from His brethren on their way to the Feast of Tabernacles, only accelerates their mental action concerning Himself. "His brethren therefore said unto Him, Depart hence, and go into Judea that Thy disciples also may behold Thy works which Thou doest. If Thou

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doest these things, manifest Thyself to the world." They believe He should show Himself publicly if He wants to be known, while He does exactly the opposite for a time in order to transfer their thoughts from the external to the internal, from the material to the spiritual. They had before them the facts on which to base a conclusion, and that conclusion is the next thing in order for them and for Him.

It will be observed that the opinions expressed in the seventh chapter of John's Gospel are based on the conception of the Christ commonly held by the Jewish people of that age. Even the rulers and the Pharisees bring the historic Jesus and the promised Messiah into comparison in their thought. They tacitly admit the impression Jesus had made on the minds of men and consider the comparison in an earnest effort to avoid identifying Jesus as the Christ. They propose to deny this identity and to refute His claim, which evidently has acceptance with many of the people.

Jesus works out His purpose with a master mind. Men are not permitted in the heat of their devotion to make Him an earthly king or even lionize Him as an earthly hero. On the other hand, they are compelled to accept or reject Him for what He is, a representative of God among them, a religious teacher, a spiritual leader. Others await events, while He shapes events and even causes them. Men rewrite history, but Jesus writes it in the minds and hearts of men, those unseen sources of history, those hidden springs of human action. He sitteth king

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forever, as the Psalmist has said, and His invisible scepter holds sway in the invisible kingdom of the human spirit. His miracles of control amid the conflicting interests of men impress us more than any miracle of healing, since these miracles of mind include many wills, every stage of personal life, and every form of social betterment. He easily takes His place as the one master mind in the midst of the Jewish people and in the course of Jewish history.

Decision trembles in the balance throughout the seventh chapter of John's Gospel. Men are making up their minds with reference to Jesus. With some their knowledge of Jesus corresponds with their ideas of the promised Messiah, while others find reason to reject this identification. One thing is plainly apparent, the conflict of ideas must eventually lead to a conflict of wills, with all the consequences of open opposition, a prospect that dampened popular ardor while it deepened popular devotion.

When Jesus separates Himself from His brethren and permits them to precede Him on the way to the feast, His act is explained on both sides. John tells us that "even His brethren did not believe on Him," thus vindicating His act from their side, and, "then went He also up, not publicly, but as it were in secret," thus explaining His act from His own point of view. His brethren expected Him to go to the feast for one reason, while the Jews expected to find Him there for quite another. He came, but not to "manifest Himself to the world," as the disciples expected Him to do, nor yet as the Jews supposed



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without thought of their opposition. In the midst of the feast He went up into the temple and taught, appearing unexpectedly to the Jews and causing astonishment among His enemies. For the moment He disarmed His enemies by taking them unawares. He had given men an opportunity to think of Him in His absence. Now He appears in the temple, where men learn to know God and obey Him and worship Him, where mind and conscience and will are at their best, where the temple service and associations challenge men to be true. Here He appears, and here He teaches without fear of the most careful scrutiny and the most critical investigation. He places Himself before them and thus invites them to bring their thought of Him and their conception of the Messiah side by side in order that they may reach a decision that no longer trembles in the balance but rests securely in reason and in faith.

The astonishment of the Jews at His literary knowledge finds expression in a question that contains an apparent contradiction. "How knoweth this man letters having never learned?" Before them is an unlearned scholar, an untaught teacher. Whence comes His wisdom, from some unknown and invisible source? The point is well taken and Jesus explains the apparent mystery by assuring them that His teaching is not His, but comes from God, the Father, Who sent Him. Its origin is divine, as He Himself comes from God. Both are from the one Source. His theory explains all mystery and removes all apparent contradiction.

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His knowledge of letters is freely admitted, but its source is the one point under consideration. The practical test of His teaching, which Jesus offers, is such as any man is able to apply. "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself." The knowledge of good is as possible as the knowledge of evil. Obedience is the organ of spiritual knowledge, and obeying God is no mere experiment to be tried once or twice, but a principle of life which becomes the habit of the soul. The will to do God's will enables any man to determine the source of Jesus' teaching, since real knowledge, like real life, involves the will as well as the intellect. Men can convince themselves by the use of the appropriate means, and the ability to do this brings with it the obligation. Knowledge fits the knowing mind and needs no further confirmation. The will of God is the law of our present life, intellectual, moral, religious, and hence human knowledge can only complete itself as it reaches the divine will. It must have a divine element and a divine source, invisible, but not unknown. Thus, and thus only, can a man know to his own personal satisfaction, know with a knowledge that has no unexplained elements, that is complete and also consistent, that harmonizes with the divine Mind and the divine knowledge.

There is nothing strange to Jesus in this reference of the will of man to the will of God in order to secure true mental action. He tests Himself by the same standard. He assures us that He is not self-

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centered, but God-centered, and that this is the secret of His being true, with no touch or taint of unrighteousness. Interior goodness must be good through and through and all around, while exterior goodness can hardly cover the surface, because it is apparent rather than real. "Goodness is goodness always," says Rev. Stewart Means, "and any increase in it means not by dimensions or measurement, but vividness, intensity, and reality. It is without succession. There was no time when goodness became goodness. It neither increases nor diminishes by age or a term of years. So with all moral and spiritual facts." They carry us back to the divine nature and the divine will, and hence Jesus shows that His teaching, like His goodness, finds its source and center in God.

And now the great Teacher asks two questions of grave import: "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you doeth the law? Why seek ye to kill Me?" If Moses gave the law, his professed followers are in duty bound to obey it. The law forbids what the representatives of the law desire to do, namely, to kill. Here is a real contradiction. The human idea bears wide of the divine thought. Disobedience reveals a darkened and disordered state of mind. Law spells order, and the disregard of law spells disorder. And so it appears that these representatives of the law have less respect for the law than the One Whom they charge with the violation of the law of the Sabbath.

The disrespectful answer of the multitude seems to produce no effect on the mind of Jesus, Who cites

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His marvelous work of healing, which, though performed on the Sabbath day, has as much reason to justify it as the circumcision of a man on the Sabbath in obedience to the command of Moses. Circumcision was adopted by Moses and not originated by him. If it was the sign of the old covenant registered in the flesh, could it be more sacred than making a man every whit whole as the sign of a new order and a new covenant? If this is a new interpretation of law and life, does it not honor and enrich both? Healing by divine touch on the Sabbath day violates neither the spirit nor the letter of the law, but carries with it its own vindication and leaves their anger without justification. Mere appearances should not govern the decisions of men, for men are called upon to judge righteous judgment. They must consider the origin of *their* teaching, the basis of *their* decisions, and the source of *their* conduct. The question of origin comes home to men as truly as to Jesus, and involves their teaching and their opinions, their conduct and their character.

Certain citizens of Jerusalem consider the case in a compromising way. They ask whether this is not He whom they seek to kill, citing the fact of His speaking openly in the temple, while His opposers say nothing to Him, and concluding with a question to which they offer no answer. "Can it be that the rulers indeed know that this is the Christ?" The rulers had stemmed the current of faith in Jesus, as men well knew, but had they at last given over *their* opposition? Had they consented to His doc-

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trine and recognized Him as the Messiah promised by the prophets? To citizens of the Holy City, these were supremely interesting questions that demanded an immediate answer, an answer worthy of the chosen people to whom the law had been entrusted, who had been educated by ages of spiritual leadership, and who had enjoyed the protecting care of divine providence.

If the citizens referred to sincerely suggest that Jesus answers to their conception of the Christ and may therefore be received as such even by the rulers, who, till this time, have rejected His claims, they also offer a reason for rejecting Him. "When the Christ cometh, no one knoweth whence He is." The Jews claim to know the origin of Jesus, while Jesus claims that He alone knows His own origin. "I am not come of Myself, but He that sent Me is true, Whom ye know not." He asserts and reasserts this fact as fundamental in His life and in any true knowledge of Him. He moves among them, not simply as a man and on His own account. He performs His works not merely because of His moral uprightness or by divine permission. He comes in fulfillment of a definite, divine purpose, which is imbedded in the history of the Jewish people. His works, His teaching, His character, all reveal a divine element that points unmistakably to His divine origin.

The desire to arrest Him and prevent further discussion stirred in many minds, but no leader had the courage to lay hands upon Him. His hour had not come, and men unwittingly respect the protecting

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providence that guarded Him from their attacks. Many of the multitude believed on Him, and offered as a reason for their faith, that the Christ could not be expected to do more signs than Jesus had already done. But faith on the part of the people meant opposition on the part of the Pharisees, who sent officers to take Him. They propose to strike Him at His weakest point, to win by force what they failed to win by argument. They are keenly intelligent, according to their theory of thinking, and as clearly irrational according to the outcome of their acts. Can they restrain the thoughts of the people and set limits to the mind of Jesus? Are they not presuming to govern the very kingdom they have steadfastly refused to enter? Can their will confront and subdue the will of God? Such are the irrational implications of their actions as they seek to stem the tide of popular sentiment in favor of the acceptance of Jesus as the Christ.

They might spare themselves the effort to remove Him from their midst if they took His words as true. "Yet a little while am I with you, and I go unto Him that sent Me." His origin in God assures His return to God. Origin governs the destiny of any man, even if he has perverted his being and "goes to his own place." His thought moves out into the invisible realms of the mind and spirit, while these Jews cannot think beyond the horizon or beneath the hour indicated on the dial. They are inapt because unwilling pupils, and make no progress in

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the comprehension of Jesus' teaching as an expression of the thought of God and the will of God.

On the last, the great day of the feast, Jesus publicly offers to any one who desires it, the water of life, that the recipient may be satisfied and may also become a source of life to others. "This spake He of the Spirit, Which they that believed on Him were to receive" after His glorification. Thus His presence explains the past and also the future into which He looks with unhindered vision. He opens human life and human history instead of closing both, as men have supposed. He is the alpha of spiritual life, and no man need fear that his devotion to Christ will bar his path or belittle his character. Men are not required to steady the ark of God, but simply to obey God and minister in His name. This bold appeal of Jesus on the great day of the feast must have had the Messianic ring, and must have conveyed to many minds the assurance that they had heard the voice of the historic Christ.

As John the Baptist had declared concerning Jesus, so history records, He must increase; increase in the estimation of candid men till they assert, "This is of a truth the prophet," "This is the Christ"; increase in the opinion of the chief priests and Pharisees who chide the officers they had sent, "Why did ye not bring Him?" To them He was becoming a subject of fear, while to the people He was becoming an object of faith. The officers defend their conduct by means of their confession, "Never man so spake," only to receive the taunt, "Are ye also led astray? Hath any of the rulers

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believed on Him, or of the Pharisees?" Here, at least, is a solid front, yet not so solid as it might at first appear, for Nicodemus, who had come to Him by night, makes inquiry that reveals a rational state of mind, if not also a real personal interest.

Jesus compels consideration on the part of each man and the acceptance of the truth rests with the individual. The Christ and the individual man, these are the final facts, and not the organized church or civil government or any intermediate agency. Rulers may resist the approach of the truth and reject its divine authority, but they cannot arrest its progress. It is irresistible because it is divine, because it is spiritual, and not subject to arrest and imprisonment. Like God, Jesus respects man's moral freedom and appeals to his intelligence. Men must think and decide for themselves. If they accept the truth they must accept it as men divinely constituted and capable of surveying their own life, past, present, and future. Hence the truth can violate no law of God, for both come from God. They have one origin. Law is the negative form of which truth is the positive reality. Law requires, truth is; law demands, truth does; law directs, truth inspires; law limits, truth liberates. The truth, as we see it in Jesus, is the fulfillment of the law, so that we find in Jesus the content of the law and of the Messianic conception of the prophets. No doubt concerning the origin of Jesus or the Person of Christ need distress us. If the humanity of Jesus has first place in our thought, it cannot hide His deity. If His deity impresses us most, we cannot



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lose sight of His humanity. The Person of Christ makes itself known in His words and deeds, which have the same origin as Himself and are lower and limited expressions of the one divine Mind. He comes as the truth in personality, the perfect expression of the mind of God and the perfect revelation of His holy will.

Thus, Jesus stands before us as the Christ of history and the Messiah of prophecy, the personal historic realization of the divine promise. If our conception of the Christ has been realized in Jesus, we must then interpret nature and the supernatural, life and death, being and becoming, the present and the future, all things according to this new key to knowledge and existence. If we fail to make this identification, we have yet to interpret Jesus without His aid and without His theory of His nature and origin, we have yet to accept ourselves as facts without any satisfactory theory of our own existence.

The presence of Jesus among the people, His teaching, and His miracles, were evidently having their effect upon their thought and life. A comparison of the Messiah of prophecy as they conceived Him, and the Christ of history as they knew Him, became a subject of personal interest. The two are identified as one and the same Person, seen from two viewpoints, prophecy and fulfillment, according to many of His contemporaries, while others dispute this conclusion without offering a satisfactory substitute. Men of all classes were reconsidering and working over their systems of re-

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ligious thought and life, and slowly coming to certain theoretical conclusions. A practical conclusion was being reached also, for Jesus was actually governing the thought and action of many, and as plainly influencing the thinking of all men. Neutrality with reference to Jesus was becoming untenable ground, and the Jewish rulers were fast becoming unprogressive, illogical, and hostile to the truth. Prophecy and history could not be turned back and the progress of the race arrested by men who stood for a system that had served its day and had reached its limit of spiritual vitality and religious leadership. As the living bud expands at the approach of spring and pushes aside its winter wrappings, so the living Christ manifests His superiority to all the outward aids and accessories of religion. The promise, "in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed," must have its fulfillment in history, whether or not the people to whom it was given have prepared themselves for it, can appreciate its real meaning, or will lend themselves to its accomplishment. The failure of no individual or nation can change the divine purpose or render it ineffectual. If the promise of God called forth less of human appreciation and co-operation than we should have expected, it was, nevertheless, fulfilled. It is God's own thought and has His own interpretation. God gives His Messiah to the Gentile as well as to the Jew. As we see Him in history, He measures up to the promise and makes His appeal to all the families of the earth. The Messiah of prophecy and the Christ of history are one and the same Per-

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son, and when we accept Jesus Christ as the Messiah of the Jew, we discover that He is the Christ of all mankind.

## CHAPTER XII.

### A GREAT SINNER AND A GREAT SAVIOR.

The authenticity of the paragraph which now comes before us has been questioned from an early period in the history of the Christian Church. No means have been found to decide the matter, and to-day it remains an open question. The translators have uniformly indicated their knowledge of this fact, but have not deemed it their duty to exclude the passage or even remove it from the place it has occupied. Arguments for and against its authenticity have been advanced, but neither side has been able to win the acceptance of the other. The case remains undecided, but as it is not our purpose to consider questions of genuineness, variations of text, or chronological difficulties, we accept the Gospel as it comes to us from the translator, with this passage included and demanding interpretation from our viewpoint.

If this paragraph rightfully belongs in the Gospel of John, there are reasons to believe it belongs just where it is. Its realism may grate on our finer feelings, but in that age no such consideration would hinder the enactment of such an event as is here described. Perhaps we should expect just such an attempt when we consider the other efforts to entrap the Master: the Pharisees' question respecting tribute money, the lawyer's question about the great

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commandment, and the Sadducees' question concerning the resurrection. Perhaps we should expect just such a test in the temple, especially after the discussion of the seventh chapter, in which, only the day before, Jesus had asserted and maintained His claim as the Christ, the promised Messiah. If they cannot silence Him by argument, why may not the practical method yield the required result? A woman, guilty of violating the seventh commandment, is brought into the presence of Jesus as He taught in the temple, and He is asked to pass sentence upon her. They brought her to Jesus, not for her relief; but for His embarrassment, not for her salvation, but for His condemnation. Theoretically He established His case beyond their power to overthrow. Could He do it practically? Could He cope with stubborn facts as successfully as He could contend with stubborn theorists whose theory was made to fit their practice? They brought this guilty woman that they might "try Him, that they might have whereof to accuse Him." They expect Him to fail at some point and so weaken His own claim.

The discussion of the day before had sent every man to his own house with something of an individualistic feeling, while Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives with a very different state of mind. If He communed with nature, and with God, His soul did not selfishly exclude men from His thoughts as though they were irresponsible and unworthy. Here, alone, amid the olive trees and beneath the glittering stars, He communes with nature and with God as though He filled the gap between with His

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own humanity. Here He finds rest for His wearied body and refreshment for His drooping spirit in silent meditation and prevailing prayer. If He is individualistic, He is social also, social to the point of racial interest and activity.

When in the morning the people meet Him again in the temple, Jesus sat down and taught them with the hopefulness of a teacher and the easy manner of one who is master of the whole situation. As a teacher He has hearers. The people press close to Him. They are interested. But the scribes and Pharisees are not willing to be set aside. They press into His presence and propose to direct the course of His instruction. They place in the midst a woman taken in the act of adultery, and raise a question of the law once more. "Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such; what sayest Thou of her?" Here is a convicted sinner, and here is the law in the case—shall the law be enforced and the sinner slain? Thus they make trial of the great Teacher—will He order them to kill the woman and so infringe on Roman right, or will He permit the violation of the law and so discredit its authority?

But Jesus does neither. He is not pushed into a corner by their ingenuity or placed in a dilemma by superior intelligence. He simply stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground. His silence silenced their souls sufficiently to enable them to hear the voice of conscience once more. His writing on the ground seems to have had an effect like the writing on the wall in the palace of Belshazzar,

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which brought conviction to a dissolute ruler. There is a silence of the soul that liberates the conscience, however it may have been bound by custom or stupefied by deliberate acts of disobedience, and thus opens the soul to a real sense of the divine presence.

They press their question and receive His answer, which concerns themselves quite as much as the woman, or even Jesus, Whom they proposed to try. "He lifted up Himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." The sinner before them may well remind them of the sinner within. If sinner can punish and even destroy sinner, according to the law of God, how can the kingdom of God be built? Such is not the process authorized by Moses; such is not the basis of divine law and divine justice; such is not the method of human redemption. Law, as an external thing, must give way to law as it is written in the heart. There can be no external basis for moral obligation and this Jesus demonstrates beyond a doubt.

The sinless Christ renders His decision with the same moral judgment, divine authority, and irresistible power which ought to characterize His sentence on the judgment day. His statement was final for Him and for them also. Nothing more remained to be said on either side, but something remained to be done by them, if not by Him. They had insisted on judgment in this test case, which they themselves had framed, and judgment they received, the judgment of the Christ which ended this

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discussion respecting the law at once and forever. And again Jesus stooped down and with his finger wrote on the ground, while the scribes and Pharisees went out, one by one, beginning from the eldest even unto the last, all self-condemned sinners. Unitedly they came, separately they go. There has been a dissolution. They admit defeat. Sin is a universal fact in the personal experience of these representatives of the law, perhaps the very sin they had assumed to condemn. Apparently they had not noted its presence in their own hearts or tested its power. Only the presence of Jesus, silent, sinless, serene, revealed to them their own inner state. He has easily outdone them and they depart, beaten in argument and convicted by their own consciences.

No man remains to condemn the accused woman, the guilty woman, the woman who had not denied her guilt, the woman who had addressed Jesus as Lord with a degree of respect, if not also of reverence and worship. No man condemned her, but this is not a sufficient vindication. When Jesus says to her, "Neither do I condemn thee: go thy way; from henceforth sin no more," this wayward woman must have rejoiced with a sense of relief as though some heavy burden had been lifted from her mind and a lighter one put in its place, the task of living an unsinning life. Jesus palliates no sin, that of the woman or that of her accusers. Palliation is not a good substitute for pardon, because it has just the opposite effect upon men, namely, to fix more firmly the burden and guilt of sin upon them. Sin is shown to be evil and also universal



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among men since the representatives of religion have publicly confessed that they are under its dominion. These unrepentant sinners retire from the presence of this great Savior with no word of pardon and no divine direction for their future guidance, while this one repentant sinner receives both from Him. Jesus Christ is not the shadow of God. He is the very substance of deity and humanity in the midst of self-satisfied religionists, in relation to an accused and repentant sinner, in the temple at Jerusalem, where devout souls gathered to pay their vows to the Most High.

The wayward woman faced Jesus longer than these representatives of the law, who dismissed themselves and departed from His presence. The light of truth breaks over us as we read that single sentence, "And Jesus was left alone," alone in the majesty of His manhood, alone as a religious teacher, alone as a spiritual leader, alone, pre-eminent, unapproachable, supreme! Then comes the completion of the sentence, "and the woman where she was in the midst," just where she had been placed by her accusers, just where she had been left by them when they withdrew. She had not departed with the rest, silently passing out with them or meekly following after them. From them she had nothing to expect, nothing that she desired. Though unrestrained, she is yet not free, and instinctively awaits her liberation by the One Who must have seemed to her greater than the law. The scribes and Pharisees considered themselves the representatives of the law of God, but had oppor-

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tunity to discover a far more rational representative, One Who saw truth and saw it whole, One Who saw the negations of law filled out in the affirmations of truth, One Who was able to meet sin with the gospel of a real redemption. Here was One Who could appeal to conscience with peculiar power, One Who could drive unrepentant sinners out of His presence, One Who could liberate a sinful soul by His own word of pardon. He meets sin to condemn it, but above all to overcome it and eliminate it. Sin is eradicable according to His conception, sin as personal experience, sin as made known and condemned by conscience, sin as violation of the law, sin as the set of the soul, sin as opposition to God, "sin as an injury to God's love, sin as a grievous wrong to our own humanity."

Our study of this disputed passage admits us into the presence of the same divine Person Who appears throughout the Gospel of John as its great central figure. This passage surely fits into the Gospel as a whole and has a certain value at this particular place. It gives us an account of a test case following the public assumption of authority by Jesus. That authority must be sustained in such a manner as to command respect and to prove that it is no mere assumption. This incident certainly serves this purpose in a striking manner and also shows that the law of God is internal and not external. It fits the course and development of doctrine which follows as it accords with the claim of Jesus which precedes. This public claim offered to His enemies the opportunity for this public test in the temple.

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Nor are we disappointed when a great sinner is brought into the presence of the great Savior. We rejoice and worship as we behold Him, divinely wise and merciful and good, the essence of conscience to evil and unrepentant men, and the essence of divine love to the repentant sinner.

If we turn our attention to the next subject of discussion we can see how this incident bears toward it and even prepares the way for it. Jesus there claims acceptance as though His authority was sufficiently known and certainly established. He teaches, but He also commands. His appeal is to man as moral. He speaks in the name of the law, not as external, but as internal. No intellectual differences can set aside His teaching or abrogate His right to their obedience. His doctrine leads straight to their duty, as the real principle of human life and the only guide to right conduct.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### BASIS OF MORAL OBLIGATION.

Jesus emphasizes His personal relation to God when He speaks of Him as "My Father," and His moral relation to men when He declares that He is "the light of the world." He shows in the course of His teaching that the lower relation is dependent on the higher, a fact that merits our careful consideration. On the one side His divine Sonship reveals Him in relation to the Father, and on the other in relation to men. The latter relation appears in three different forms: First, He is the light of the world; second, He is the only Savior from sin; third, He is the one spiritual Leader Who abides in the house forever, Who is not self-glorifying, and Who is greater than Abraham.

With such themes of instruction Jesus could not avoid crossing the Jewish conceptions of religious life and precipitating renewed discussion. To the Jews, Jesus is no mere theorizer, no mere speculative philosopher whose ideas have no practical interest and no personal bearing. Like the light, Jesus is ever present, active, insistent, and able to find entrance to the human mind through the intelligence and conscience, the emotions and will. Like the light, He may be shut out of the moral nature, but, like the light, He continues to shine, beating against every barrier and bearing in upon every soul.

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He is the light of the world, having a real moral relation to every soul, a well-defined duty to every man. On other lips His statement would appear to be a glittering generality. It comes from Him with the authority of truth, having both a general meaning and a particular application. It has significance for the individual. "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Life shall be luminous to him, and not the opposite. He shall know what he is here for and what is his proper prospect. As a follower of Jesus, a man steps out of moral darkness and walks in the light that properly belongs to human life, the light of the unbiased intellect, the clear conscience, the earnest will, the light of duty, the light of truth, the light of God.

The Pharisees challenge this statement of His relation to men on the ground that His testimony refers to Himself and therefore cannot be true. His answer affirms that His witness in reference to Himself is true because He knows His origin and the outcome of His career. They know neither, and hence they cannot hold His life in review or estimate its real value. Their judgment is human only, and human in the most limited sense. Jesus judges no man, but if He were to judge, His judgment would be true, for it would be based on His divine Sonship, which relates Him to God, the Father. Thus they can see that He is not alone, but His own testimony is confirmed by the Father, and according to their law, the testimony of two must be accepted.

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As men who continue to think in terms of time and space and physical form, it was only natural for these Pharisees to ask, "Where is Thy Father?" They have His language, but not the personal knowledge of Jesus that would enable them to know God as the supreme Personality. They have missed the entrance way. They have failed to see in Jesus the light of the world, and likewise fail to follow the light to its ultimate source. Jesus speaks of the Father, not in terms of time and place, of providence and history, but simply and solely with reference to Himself. Personal beings are known only in a personal way and through personal relations and not as isolated, unrelated, and individual. The knowing of Jesus is, therefore, the knowing of the Father, in fact and essence, and in the best and only way men can know Him. If the statement implies a conformity of character to character, a relation of person to person, an intimacy of life and being that transcends human experience, it does not carry us beyond the divine Sonship assumed by Jesus and described by the Apostle John.

If men wish to deny the relation of Jesus to God, the Father, they must first deny His relation to men as the light of the world. They must begin by denying His moral relation to moral beings, since this links itself with the other practically and theoretically. If they admit the moral relation of Jesus to all men, then let them in consistency admit also His relation to God, the Father, as the real basis of the subordinate relation.

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Truth can only be itself. It cannot bear down its opponents like a stronger army crushes a weaker one. The power of God in Jesus is not His for compulsion, though power is the one thing the unspiritual man respects. Men know power as force, but less as authority, and still less as divine purpose and will. But why, with Jesus before them, can men not catch one little glimpse of God? As we all well know, though the light of the world is shining, it still takes eyes to see.

The discussion thus far produced opposition, but "no man took Him, because His hour was not yet come." His teaching touched men, if only to raise their resentment, because its bearing was practical and personal, however wide its reach of thought and comprehensive its theory of being and life.

Once more He reveals Himself to these Jews as He declares His departure from the world, their inability to find or follow Him, and the fact that they shall die in their sins. "Ye shall die in your sins," a statement that evidently means, ye shall continue to reject the only One Who can save you or any man from sin. They are dependent upon Him as their only Savior, according to His knowledge of the case. The Jews find no explanation of a departure that would place Him beyond their reach. His explanation might set their minds at rest, for He traces their origin and His own, asserts their supreme relation to this world, declares that they shall die in their sins unless they believe in Him as their Messiah and that He is the only Savior from sin. Jesus differs from these Jews as to the origin

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and outcome of life, as to knowledge of God, and personal relation to God. They stand apart. "Ye are from beneath; I am from above; ye are of this world; I am not of this world." The contrast is complete. He proceeds to His conclusion, and asserts that there is no escape from sin except by faith in Him as God's one and only Mediator.

The arguments of Jesus and His moral courage in the presence of His opponents prove Him to be no ordinary person, even in their estimation, though they steadfastly refuse to accept His account of Himself, while they have no satisfactory account of their own. "Who art thou?" is their belated question, which Jesus answers in two ways: First, by referring them to His previous statements concerning Himself; and, second, by pointing them to that future event in His life in which they are principal actors as well as Himself. "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am He." Even they shall know that he is the Messiah, man's representative, man's substitute, sent by the Father, taught by Him Whose Presence abides with Him and to Whom He renders a perfect obedience. No doubt the event justified this prophetic statement. These very men must have known these very facts as well as they could know them without personally accepting them as true and thus becoming followers of the Christ.

The conflict of controversy dies away as they draw near to the cross; their victory and His, yet so widely different as to be directly opposite. The sweet sense of His relationship to God, the Father,



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finds expression in these words, "And He that sent Me is with Me; He hath not left Me alone; for I do always the things that are pleasing to Him." In the divine calmness of His inner life His relation to God is real and His Sonship perpetual. Error and opposition cannot discredit or destroy it; they are not necessary to its existence; they do not call it into self-consciousness. Any man who will may look in upon this inner life of Christ, for it has manifested itself to all men in service and self-sacrifice.

Once more John records the effect of Jesus' words, "As He spake these things many believed on Him," an effect that is at once apparent to Jesus. After what He had said of His relation to God and man we would naturally expect Him to know believers and address them as such. He acts according to His own profession and never disappoints any reasonable expectation. He confirms His confession by His conduct. He addresses those Jews who have just believed on Him. He encourages them to abide in His word and thus to be truly His disciples, for as disciples they shall know the truth, and the truth shall make them free. The believer has prospect and promise of personal development such as should satisfy his common sense as well as his religious aspiration.

Men are slow to recenter and reconstitute themselves. Their old conceptions cling to them and prevent their ready adaptation to new beliefs. They cannot at once master the full significance of the new position. As Abraham's seed, they claim that they have not been in bondage to any man. They

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have not learned to distinguish, however, between the spiritual bondage and the spiritual freedom of which Jesus speaks. The sinner, whatever his ancestry, is the bond servant of sin, and hence is not and cannot be free. The bond servant does not abide in the house, like the Son, Who abides in God's kingdom, as it appears in the midst of the race and the cosmic order. The Son has a permanent value and a super-temporal existence. "If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." This is spiritual freedom, the freedom of the mind and heart, the freedom of the mind that has rejected error and welcomed truth, the freedom of the heart that knows God as revealed in Christ and God as a Spirit, the freedom of holy life and unhindered action, the freedom of a being in moral balance and religious poise.

Part of His Jewish hearers have believed, while a part continue their contention. Their unspoken claim that they are Abraham's seed Jesus admits, while He openly reads their minds; "Ye seek to kill Me," assigning as their reason for their attitude of mind that His word has not free course in them. He boldly contrasts His relation to His Father and their relation to their father. This fundamental difference causes the difference in mental movement and moral quality, which has become so apparent. Abraham's seed they are, but not Abraham's children, for if they were, they would do the works of Abraham. He never sought to take the life of any one who told him the truth, as Jesus now charges them with doing, and hence avers, "Ye do the works

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of your father," and are true to your real parentage.

In sheer self-defense these Jews claim God as their father, while Jesus at once seeks to show the inconsistency of that claim. If the claim were true, they would love Him, for He came from God, not alone of His own will, but being sent by God. Hence, in order to establish their claim they must destroy His, a thing they were willing to do by taking His life contrary to God's command. Their claim is not consistent nor does it relieve the contention. The gap widens. They cannot understand Jesus from their point of view, nor can He convey to their minds His teaching because of the fundamental difference of character and origin. "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do." Your will governs your knowing and is governed by another will in which evil has its source and center. Just as the devil was a murderer from the beginning and the father of lies, so these Jews possess the same spirit and thereby determine their real relationship. Can they find a flaw in this argument, a misuse of facts, an unjustified assumption or a false assertion?

His personal challenge, "Which of you convicteth Me of sin," calls forth no charge and no proof, though flung at His opponents when they would gladly have accepted it. Sin may be defined as the state or act of one who is out of right relation to God; it is disobedience to the law of God; it is the rejection of the divine will; it is the exaltation of the human will; it is the self-centering of life. Sin

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as He knows it, does not affect Him, and so Jesus safely passes the inspection of His enemies. He is willing to be tried by the same standard He used in testing them. Neither He nor they, as moral beings, could be content with any lower test. If He is sinless, they should accept the fact; if He speaks the truth, they should receive it, for moral beings cannot be arbitrary and yet maintain their moral integrity.

The basis for communication between God and man is stated thus: "He that is of God heareth the words of God; for this cause ye hear them not, because ye are not of God." The man who is related to God by obedience has a basis for understanding Him, as well as a disposition to know Him. Character determines what we listen to with interest and what we accept. We exercise a certain selection as to what we hear, welcoming what we want to hear and rejecting all else, thus deciding our own development and destiny by our own choice. "Natural selection" appears like a mental fiction as compared with personal selection, which is always very real, if not always very rational.

The opposing Jews suggest an explanation of Jesus which served their purpose, if it did not satisfy their minds. He takes no trouble to refute the accusation that He is a Samaritan, and not really a Jew by birth or belief, for it needed no denial. He denies the charge that He has a demon and acts by demonic agency. His superhuman wisdom and power come from a divine source. "I honor My Father and ye dishonor Me," and in so

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doing ye dishonor the Father. Thus Jesus and the Jews stand apart more and more definitely as tested by this supreme relation of all moral beings.

How readily the great Teacher passes from discussion and self-defense to the preaching of the truth. With the easy emphasis of perfect knowledge, He says to them, "If a man keep My word he shall never see death." The Jews interrupt Him with their old charge and object to the implied superiority of Jesus as compared with Abraham and the prophets, who were not free from death. Does Jesus think Himself greater than Abraham and the prophets? Who does He think He is? He claims to have power over death, that God is His Father, that God glorifies Him, that He knows God, that Abraham rejoiced to see His day, that before Abraham was born He existed. He applies to Himself the formula of Deity, "I am," in the affirmation of His self-existence and His pre-existence as regards the human race. This statement definitely develops His previously-announced doctrine that God is His Father. As no sin could be found in His conduct or character, so no flaw appears in His theory of Himself as related to God, for He ever lives in that immediate, perfect, and personal relation that is best expressed in the term Sonship.

As the Son of God, He is the spiritual liberator of men, freeing them from the burden and bondage of sin, from error and its mean limitations, from evil in its manifold forms, from death, the penalty of sin. But spiritual freedom is positive as well as negative. It has a content of goodness and great-

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ness unmeasured and unmeasurable. The spiritually free continue in the word of Jesus, which opens into life and happiness and hope. Truth belongs to them, the system of knowledge and life and being that centers in God. The Son of God belongs to them as the light of the world, the only Savior from sin, and the one great spiritual Leader.

If Jesus rightly traces His origin back to God, the Father, and if He was sent by the Father, then His moral relation to each man as "the light of the world" is a perfectly rational conception. If He died on the cross as the Son of man for the sins of mankind, and if His obedience to God kept Him in perfect personal association with God, then He may reasonably be regarded as man's only Savior. If, as the Son, He abides in the house, being superior to death because He is superior to evil and error, and because He teaches truth and makes God known to men, then His power to make men free indeed is but a logical consequence. Thus the relation of Jesus to man as moral and to God as His Father completes the circle of His moral relations.

The conflict here described leaves certain conclusions clearer than before. Jesus appears as a man to the eyes of these critical Jews; a sinless man indeed, an unwelcome but necessary admission; an ideal man, who impresses men with the sense of His own reality while discovering in them the unreal. He is superhuman in wisdom and power. He explains Himself as One Who comes from God; the promised Messiah, the Savior of the world, the Son of God in a special sense, to Whom God

## Basis of Moral Obligation

answers as His Father in this same sense. As Jesus measures His own mind for us and patiently tells us who He is, first as related to men, and then as related to God, as He carefully unfolds to unwilling minds His theory of being and well-being, as He describes doubt in the plainest terms and encourages faith by inviting it to realize spiritual freedom, we catch glimpses of greatness which we refuse to call demonic, but resolutely denominate divine, which fits into His theory of Himself, and which wrecks all other theories on the rocks of inconsistency on the one side or beaches them on the other on the shoals of inadequacy.

His Sonship, which expresses His relation to God, the Father, becomes the basis of His moral relation to men, a relation that finds expression in His bold assertion, "I am the light of the world." Thus founded, His moral authority is absolute. It rests on no temporal basis, adopts no limited principle of development, and offers no system such as men are wont to construct. He, therefore, assumes the moral obligation of His hearers to know Him and to believe Him, two points which are closely pressed in this eighth chapter of our Gospel. "Ye know neither Me nor My Father." "If I say truth, why do ye not believe Me?" His power to enlighten men, to restore them and to perfect them morally so that they are free from the bondage of evil, so free as never to see death as the punishment of unrepented sin, appeals to them for instant recognition.

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As the light of the world, Jesus reveals moral obligation wherever there is a moral nature. He views man's moral nature as an original endowment that implies a religious relation. He plainly shows that moral obligation cannot be divorced from religious life without degrading both. As both moral and religious, Jesus becomes the ethical standard of the race.

"Thou seemest human and divine,  
The highest, holiest manhood, Thou:  
Our wills are ours, we know not how;  
Our wills are ours, to make them Thine."

Thus we trace our moral obligation back to God, Who creates and Who sustains moral beings. Never are men separate and independent, but rightly rest back upon Him Who gave them being and Who attunes free moral agents to the harmonies of holy life. No standard of convenience or custom suffices to guide and govern men. They require a law that is absolute and authoritative, even if they reject it. The basis of morality, like that of religion, is in the heavens, and if we find it in the heart of man we cannot rest content until we have discovered it in the heart of God.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE DIVINE INTELLIGENCE OF JESUS.

The text taken in chapter eight, "I am the light of the world," seems to be the text of the ninth chapter also, in which Jesus gives sight to a blind man and then reveals Himself to this one, at least, as the Son of God. No doubt the light shone into other minds, but apparently produced no corresponding result, at least in the case of the Pharisees, who pursued their chosen course unchanged, if not altogether unhindered. They propose to break the force of the miracle which they are not able to discredit, call Jesus a Samaritan, a sinner, a man possessed of a demon or controlling spirit, evil, yet wise and powerful. They cast out of the synagogue the man who had been blind from his birth, whose sight Jesus had restored, and whom, in consequence, they pronounce a sinner. It was a Sabbath healing, and shows the purpose of Jesus not to respect their external interpretation of the law and also their purpose to continue the conflict and maintain their old idea of the Sabbath against the plain teaching and the practical claims of Jesus. They have even agreed that no one can remain in the synagogue if he believes in Jesus as the Christ and accepts His teaching as true and authoritative. They propose to meet His miraculous power with their power of excommunication, which had, as one of its immediate effects, social and religious ostracism.

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Amid this moral darkness, Jesus appears as the light shining clear and constant, and making all about Him luminous with the light of life. A divine intelligence characterizes Him in the ninth chapter, which becomes more and more apparent as we see Him looking into the minds of men with their secret thoughts open before Him, their moral state revealed to Him, and even their mental attitude and personal bias clearly within His view. But His radiant Spirit takes no unfair advantage of men and makes no unfriendly use of His superior knowledge. On the other hand, He reveals His own mind and heart to men, throwing open to them His benevolent thought, His divine nature, and His holy purpose to enlighten men with the light of truth. His intelligence embraces the minds of men and the mind of God, and hence He brings the knowledge of the truth by imparting the knowledge of Himself.

In the case of the man born blind, two views respecting the cause are entertained as possible. In harmony with the teaching of that age, the disciples consider the cause as human. No other possible cause occurs to their minds, and hence they proceed to locate the responsibility, placing it upon the man himself or upon his parents. In harmony with the teaching of our age, we do not attribute sin to an infant in the sense of personal guilt, while we do in the sense of natural taint and tendency. In both senses we charge sin to parents, and hence for us the question has practically but one answer. Hereditary influence might, indeed, account for this blindness, since much of the evil in the world, men-

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tal, and physical, is known to flow directly from this prolific source. Jesus does not adopt the view advanced by the disciples, simply because He has a better one of His own. This man's blindness is not the result of sin at all, his own or that of his parents. The statement of Jesus will appear less dogmatic when we consider two things; first, that the facts in the case, so far as the narrative goes, harmonize with it; and, second, that such a statement of fact must be expected on the part of One Who has the divine intelligence of Jesus. The case is before Him on both sides, the human and the divine. He knows all there is to know about it, and expresses His view accordingly. He discovers a totally different cause. God in heaven does some things which men on earth wrongly attribute to human agency. How wonderful that Jesus knows! How reassuring that He never places sin where it does not belong, and never classes the innocent with the guilty!

Jesus declares that this blind man is one of God's examples, just as we know Job was one in an earlier age. Not for his sin did Job suffer bodily affliction and mental anguish, but to demonstrate his integrity as against the insinuations of Satan, to exalt moral character as a thing of supreme worth, and to vindicate the ways of God with men, three great ends which are, or ought to be, inseparably associated. The mind is the man, the spirit, the self-conscious being who presides over the body and over whom God Himself is the ever-watchful guardian. This blind man unconsciously awaits the coming of the Christ that he may receive his

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sight, natural and spiritual. Without confession of sin, and without requiring faith on his part, his sight is bestowed by the use of the simplest means and by the co-operation of the man himself in ready obedience to Christ's command.

With his newly-acquired power of vision, the man becomes a witness to the fact of his healing, and in the stress of doubt and denial, testifies concerning the character of his healer. He sees with his mind as well as his eyes. The intelligence of Jesus has had its effect upon him, at least, and upon every fair-minded man who has carefully considered his case. The Pharisees, however, are still true to themselves, and while they cannot deny the deliverance of the blind man from his natal darkness, they pass by the benevolent act of his Healer and fix upon the fact that the work was done on the Sabbath day. They come again to their old contention and their old conclusion. "This man is not from God because He keepeth not the sabbath day," in the same way they are accustomed to observe it. They set an example which they expected Him to follow; they interpreted the law of the Sabbath, which they required Him to make the law of His conduct; they menaced while He ministered; they used the Sabbath to oppose Him, while He used it to aid others; they based their authority on their observance of the Sabbath, while He rested His upon His relation to God the Father; to them the Sabbath meant mastery, while to Him it meant ministry. If their idea of the Sabbath gives place to His, then His whole system of thought and life

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will displace theirs and the divine intelligence of Jesus will become the illuminating center of all minds. Their cherished honors will fade and their inherited power disappear, a consummation devoutly to be avoided, whatever may be the effect upon their own intelligence.

The Pharisees, therefore, resolutely maintain their theory and assert that Christ is not from God. Their one argument is that He does not observe the Sabbath, that He transgresses the law, that this spells sin, and hence their conclusion. From the same facts others reach exactly the opposite conclusion. How can a man that is a sinner do such signs? Divine power alone could have produced the miracle, and that meant divine co-operation with Jesus. No course of questioning could rob the healed man of his personal experience or reduce his estimate of his healer below the rank of a prophet, nor could any course of questioning change the minds of the Jews even when the testimony of the parents establishes the fact of their son's healing beyond a peradventure.

They are consistently working out their theory and enforcing their agreement to punish any one who would confess Jesus as the Christ. In deference to their own determination, and as a practical relief from their own mental embarrassment, they assert that Jesus is a sinner, while the blind man states the doctrine of the miracle with unexpected clearness and comprehension. God hears not sinners, but only men who do His will. This man's power to heal plainly demonstrates that He is from

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God. He is not self-centered and self-seeking, not disobedient to God, and not a transgressor of the law. He must, therefore, be what He represents Himself to be, and in proving His character He has proved His claim.

A course of thinking, with its corresponding course of conduct, cannot be arrested in mid-air, but must be pursued to its ultimate conclusion. These Jews cannot rest till they have asserted that the healed man was born in sin, not distinguishing between sin as personal or sin as hereditary. They reject his testimony and his teaching, and class him with Jesus on the supposition that the two are of one kind, and both are bad. If their final view was not the same as their first one, it was yet forced upon them by their theory and their purpose. Their last statement of the case is the exact opposite of the statement of Jesus. He sees no sin resting upon this man, personal or hereditary, as the cause of his blindness. The Jews see sin in the healed and the Healer, and cast the man out of the synagogue as his merited punishment. They can at least be consistent and carry out their theory and their purpose as far as these will go. They calmly propose to force their will upon other wills and their thought upon other minds. Their dogmatism leads to violence, and the two together take the place of intelligence and reason, and the psychology of evil is thus seen to resolve itself into the psychology of the perverted will.

Jesus manifests a personal interest in the mental and spiritual welfare of the man upon whom He

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had conferred the power of vision. He now asks him to believe on the Son of God, assuring him that he has seen Him, and that "He it is that speaketh with thee," a satisfactory identification and sufficient description. God may be very near and yet quite unknown to us. The Son of God is the supreme object of faith according to His own teaching. Obedience to Him must, therefore, be the beginning of wisdom, even when it leads a man into open conflict with other men who are apparently superiors in intelligence and authority. Jesus carries out His doctrine to its logical conclusion and offers Himself as the object of faith to this one person who has been convinced of His character. Others may overhear, but this man hears; hears in direct address and in terms adapted to his experience, the statement of the object of Christ's coming, namely, to relieve moral blindness and as a consequence to confirm it when the light of divine truth is shut out of the soul by its own deliberate action. He came to show the difference between the sinner and the saint. He came for judgment, to make a distinction with a difference, to define duty in contrast with disobedience, to illuminate the reason and the moral judgment in order to moral choice and moral development. His judgment is universal in its reach and application, like His moral relation to men. Hence His coming includes the case of this blind man, physical, mental, and spiritual, and lays the foundation of a personal relationship that brings light and life and liberty to the blind man and to Jesus the opportunity to reveal Himself as a divine

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intelligence that is the light of the world and likewise the light of a single soul.

Evil can never be fully satisfied with itself, just as it cannot rely upon its own knowledge with perfect confidence. Its theory of knowledge, like its theory of life, reveals a certain imperfection, a certain limitation, an essential littleness. Hence the evil man wants to know what the good man thinks of him. The question of the Pharisees, "Are we also blind?" calls out the solemn declaration, "If ye were blind ye would have no sin: but now ye say, We see: your sin remaineth." It remains, with all it signifies, transgression of the law and disobedience to God, if Jesus is indeed His chosen representative; and shows that other mark, selfishness, if the blind man had any right to His service or Jesus any claim to conscientious consideration. As the Pharisees virtually claimed that they were free from sin, the conclusion Jesus reaches is a complete reversal of human judgment.

The Jews found themselves unable to prevent faith in Jesus as the Son of God, and, what was scarcely less objectionable, the public profession of that faith. Their authority over the conscience and reason and will fall below that of Jesus, Who seemed to hold in His hand the key to the human heart. His victory in this individual case foreshadows His universal victory. What is true for one honest mind is true for any and every honest mind. If one man finds God in Jesus Christ by the processes of experience and reason, another can come to the same conclusion in the same way. If sin be



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the starting point, the mind and heart must feel burdened and dissatisfied until both reach the personal presence of the sinless One and rest by faith in the Son of God, the one divine Intelligence, all-embracing and all-luminous amid the moral darkness of a sinful world.

Throughout this chapter, the intelligence of Jesus manifests itself as divine in His understanding of men and relations, in His compass of knowledge, and in His adjustment to existing conditions. The intelligence of the blind man had its compass and its capacity. Within his own personal experience this man asserted that his knowledge was final. Of one thing he was sure: he knew the facts given in his own experience with perfect knowledge and with perfect confidence, and this became the starting point from which the knowing process could safely proceed. He is profoundly rational and hence becomes religious in the Christian sense. The intelligence of the neighbors embraces wonder and inquiry, doubt and faith sufficient to awaken a deep desire to see the great Healer. The intelligence of the Jews reveals a mixed character and self-limited range. They know that God spoke to Moses, and this becomes their nearest approach to God. They do not know whence Jesus came, in spite of the fact that He has come within their personal observation. They know who Jesus claims to be, but they do not know how to admit His claim or how successfully to dispute or destroy it. They know that Jesus is a sinner, but they do not know how a sinner can do God's work. A contradiction must come

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in somewhere, and they prefer to place it here. Jesus is a sinner who does God's work, but as a sinner He cannot be the Christ. The man born blind taunts them with their confessed ignorance, "Ye know not," right in the field where you ought to know. Here your intelligence failed, just where it ought to shine clearest, just where reason ought to reign and reach its climax. You reject Jesus and would reject Him on any terms. You are not rational in your rejection of Jesus or right in your opposition to one who does God's work. These Jewish teachers cling to their theory and refuse to be taught by one whom they regard as a moral inferior. Their minds are narrowed down to less than the normal human limits, remain in unstable equilibrium, and present a perfect contrast to the unfettered and unlimited intelligence of Jesus.

As the rays of the sun fall lightly upon us, so the light of the world centered in Jesus Christ shines with its manifold powers and works its wonders everywhere. No one can be hid from the searching rays of this higher light which ministers to the higher life or relentlessly reveals the genesis of degeneracy and the marks of false development. The divine intelligence of Jesus fills a place in the world of the moral and spiritual just as certainly and as necessarily as the sun fills its place in the world of the material. It is central with reference to truth and duty and moral development. If it appears to be predominantly critical in the ninth chapter of John's Gospel, in the tenth it is chiefly constructive; if it comes into comparison with the

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intelligence of men in the one, in the other it shines out with characteristic freedom; if in the one it comes into conflict with the Jewish system of thought and life, in the other it proceeds to unfold according to its own nature in the realm of life and being, which is pre-eminently its own.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE NEW MORAL ORDER.

The shepherd and his flock are employed as the symbols of thought by which Jesus sets forth His relation to His followers on the one hand, and their relation to Him on the other. The known side of the analogy, so familiar to Jewish minds, fosters freedom of mental action, not even suggesting their preconceived ideas of a theocratic kingdom with temporal forms and earthly power. The kingdom which Jesus represents is not the one they have anticipated or fondly pictured to themselves, not even the one that then existed, centering in Jerusalem and professing to receive its law from Sinai, but a new moral order, having a new leadership, a new life, and a new unity. It centers in a person, the Person of Christ, Who is the representative of both God and man, and Who gives His life of love and service as the law of His people. He describes His people as His sheep and not His subjects, for He is their leader and liberator. He speaks to them in terms of life and its relations, for no earthly kingdom can conform to this heavenly life, which must be constituted according to its own nature, and which leads on to the formation of a society of its own kind.

If the life of Jesus is heavenly and divine in its character, it cannot fit into the molds fashioned by

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religious leaders who are predominantly human and earthly. It can adapt itself to human conditions, but it cannot lose its moral and spiritual quality. When it enters into the activities and relations of human life, it must maintain its character, and hence it must institute a new order, a moral order, a spiritual order, an order in which a being like Jesus can exercise a real leadership, where all life is like His own, and where unity is rightly realized. A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand, but the kingdom Jesus establishes is to be an everlasting kingdom because of its internal constitution, its essential unity, its quality of life, and its enduring leadership.

The development of His doctrine has proceeded steadily till the outlines of the new moral order definitely appear. The conflict with the old order, which is yet in existence and which is represented by these Jews, must continue, but many men are ready for progressive ideas and constructive doctrine. They are anxiously looking for something better. They really desire a new leadership and a new life. The old can no longer satisfy the demands of their awakened minds and earnest hearts. It is yet before them, but not within them. It has served its age and visibly wanes as it comes in comparison with the clearer light and larger leadership of Jesus. Just the thing the Jewish leaders dreaded is coming to pass before their eyes and in spite of their perpetual protest. In mind and heart many men are devoted to the new Leader, Who leads men like a shepherd leads his flock, Who opens the way of life

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like a door that swings freely on its hinges, Who binds men back to God the Father by the single strand of His own personal friendship.

We should expect to find the manifestation of the Messiah or the revelation of God to man, as we prefer to think of it, embodied in a history, a literature, and a philosophy of its own. We find all we expected and more, and in dealing with these three disciplines we place the emphasis differently at different times, but it should be evident to all thinking men, that, in recent years, the emphasis on the third has been less than that accorded the first or second. The tenth chapter of John unfolds the philosophy of the religious relation as taught by Jesus rather than the history of that relation. Disciples must know its nature in order to appreciate its worth and in order to respond to its regnant claims.

The analogy here employed sets forth the true character of Jesus as the one shepherd of His flock, as their spiritual leader, as their personal protector, Whose perfect knowledge individualizes His sheep and Whose voice they know in distinction from all others. His flock know not the voice of strangers, so different in spirit and temper and purpose, so unlike the gentle, yet commanding, voice of this One Who is not a thief, not a robber, and not a stranger to His people. His purpose is not theft, not the taking of life, not the destruction of character, but the bestowment of life with that spiritual amplitude which the soul of man instinctively requires. His purpose issues in a personal devotion that offers its own life for the benefit of His flock.

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It has an exterior as well as an interior value. His philosophy finds its way into history and literature as a secondary and subordinate fact, simply because it finds its way into the life of men.

Jesus is the good shepherd in complete contrast to the hireling who has no sense of ownership, but who has a keen perception of danger, which prompts him to seek his own safety as the first principle that governs his conduct. He loses sight of his sheep when he catches sight of the approaching wolf, and then he sees no one except himself. Unlike the hireling, Jesus sacrifices His own life for His flock and knows them individually and personally even as they know Him in like manner, an intimacy of knowledge which corresponds with the divine knowing described in these words, "even as the Father knoweth Me and I know the Father." His mind moves upward to the very center of being and then downward again to His sheep and to their unity in one flock with one shepherd. His devotion of Himself to the flock has the Father's approval, while it in no wise robs Him of His life and leadership, which He assures us rests upon a specific appointment, "This commandment received I from My Father." His being must be stated in terms of His relation to His followers, else their being cannot be expressed in terms of their relation to Him. This illustrative form of teaching may be regarded as literature and studied as though that were its chief end, but in a far more important sense it is philosophy, the philosophy of the relation of Jesus to men of responsive minds.

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But Jesus must explain His own teaching to His own disciples. He is the door, the way of entrance, the way forward in the total development of the individual, and hence He becomes an essential factor in individual life. He assumes a central place, just such a place as would be appropriate for God and for Him alone. He is the good shepherd, whose protecting care over His flock engages His whole being, and ought, therefore, to call forth a corresponding interest and devotion. A door does not exist for itself alone, but also for those who go in and out. A shepherd does not live apart, but with and for his flock. As long as men need spiritual leadership, He offers it to them, and as long as they desire to advance in life, He opens to them the opportunity. He is the legitimate leader Who comes to men and invites, while the illegitimate leader gets admission to men's minds and hearts in any way he can, in order that he may ultimately compel obedience.

Men find in Jesus Christ an answering reality. He is more than men who assume to be shepherds when they are not, who are not divinely appointed, and who have no legitimate claim to human support. He is always more than men think He is; more as a leader, more as a life-giver, more as a unifier of His followers. His relation to men cannot be exhausted in thought or personal experience as long as men respond to Him in thought and life. Matter responds to matter according to the law of gravity, which is an invisible force that binds the material universe together in a won-



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derful yet necessary unity. The great body mysteriously attracts the little body as the little one attracts the great one, and each is the measure of its own power to attract and to be attracted. In itself, gravity shows no marks of personal agency, while it answers the ends of intelligence by laying the solid foundation for the superstructure of creation. Above the realm of matter, in the realm of mind and spirit, gravity disappears from our view and personality reveals itself in its essential selfhood and its power to attract and repel.

Men are not left without the higher connections of life; these are all supplied. Jesus answers to the demands of the human mind and heart, giving to both their completion and their sense of reality. He it is Who completes the arch of being. He it is Who constitutes perfect manhood and enduring society by His divine leadership, His gift of eternal life, and His principle of spiritual unity. Thus He establishes the moral order in which men can live and move and have their being with a satisfying sense of its present worth, its future prospect, and its perpetual promise. As men learn to know the Christ, they must also learn to know themselves, and both sides of this arch of being must meet in solid self-support. As He is the door they must find entrance through Him; as He is the good shepherd, they must follow as He leads and share His protection; as He unifies all moral beings in one moral company and companionship men must respond to His harmonizing influence till they are accepted as

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worthy members of the one flock with its one shepherd.

The universal, the divine, element in the teaching of Jesus cannot be concealed by doubt or cancelled by criticism. As the light of the world Jesus claims a moral relation to every man, which every man ought honorably to own; as the door of entrance into the new moral order, He is one and only; as the good shepherd, He is without a real rival or a known compeer. He proposes to unify all moral beings in one harmonious society on the principles of His own teaching and His own life. He carries out His conception to its completion with no merely temporal view of Himself and His followers. If His relation to His followers goes to the center of His own being and theirs, if He is really their shepherd and they are really His sheep, then this relation extends from the very center of His personality to the very circumference of His authority. The moral order which He establishes must be universal. All worthy personality must be related to Him in the unity of obedience, the association of life, and the blessings of benevolent leadership.

The sacrifice of Himself for His disciples calls forth the Father's love for Jesus, drawing it from the deepest fountain of life and being. He gives His life as a real gift and takes it again as a real possession, and this free act for humanity wins the divine approval, for it lies in the course of divine thought and purpose. It is not incidental in His life and His relation to His followers, a relation that is real and sacrificial and personal on both sides. No

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one robs Him of His life. Of His own free will He offers it, having the power to lay it down and the power to take it again. Nor is this simply the ordinary experience of human life, but a God-given privilege, expressed in the specific command of the Father. Life is too sacred to relinquish without the divine command. His voluntary, sacrificial death proclaims Him a Son and a Savior, but not a suicide who seeks to escape from his enemies by self-destruction, not even a martyr who dies in devotion to some great principle. He perfects His relation to humanity by carrying it beyond death, the consequence and the penalty of sin.

If Jesus has worked out His thought to its logical conclusions, so also have the people worked out theirs according to their ability. A division of sentiment appears and these differing opinions work themselves out to their corresponding extremes. Many declare that He has a demon and is mad and is therefore unworthy of a patient hearing, while others assert that His words are not those of a demon and His deeds are certainly not attributable to such an agent. When He is challenged to tell them plainly, boldly, if He is the Christ, He answers by recalling His former statements on the subject, by citing His works as His witnesses, and by affirming that they do not believe because they are not of His sheep. A difference of being and a perversion of relation causes a difference of opinion respecting Himself.

Once more He yields to the necessity of stating His relation to His followers, seven separate counts

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being enumerated: His sheep hear His voice, He knows them, they follow Him, He gives them eternal life, they shall never perish, "no one shall snatch them out of His hand," "no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." His statement of His relation to men on one side calls forth on the other His statement of His relation to God. He asserts His unity with the Father, a fact implied in what He had previously said in reference to Himself, but here it is stated in a form that cannot be misunderstood. The Jews at once accept it as an assertion of His deity. Jesus does not question the correctness of their inference, but maintains His character by affirming that His good works were from the Father, His Jewish hearers regarding the miraculous as an almost incontrovertible argument. If they cannot properly appreciate His personality, they can at least estimate aright the works of Jesus which lie in the realm of physical fact and beneficent purpose.

The Jews seek to separate between the good works of Jesus and the Person who performed them. They desire to accept the good works while they are determined to stone the One Who performed them, as though being and doing were separate and contradictory in the Person of Christ. They charge Him with blasphemy, and for this they would stone Him, "because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God." Jesus stays their hands by referring to their law, in which men are called gods because to them the word of God had come. Their wrath is arrested for the moment as "the Scripture cannot

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be broken" by them. But Jesus has not withdrawn His claim or reduced it to the terms of the Scripture He has just quoted. If men are so exalted by the word of God coming to them, how "say ye of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said I am the Son of God?" His is a higher claim than the law contemplates, while it is the same in content, for Jesus comes as an expression of the mind of God. His statement, I am the Son of God, is not blasphemy, but simply a statement of fact supported by evidence they are able to weigh. "If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not." His unity with the Father is reflected in His works. He is no mere actor on the stage of life. What He appears to be, that He is and never less. There is no real line of cleavage between the works of Jesus and His Person, as they supposed, and yet He proposes that they should believe His works without believing Him, as easier ground for men whose personal prejudice has blinded their eyes to His personal worth. He asks them to believe His works as products of divine power, even if they cannot at once believe Him as a divine person, for this one step in the right direction will logically lead them to a true knowledge of the Father's relation to Jesus and then also His relation to the Father.

Thus Jesus clearly defines His relation to God, the Father, on one side, in order, on the other, to make clear His relation to His followers and their relation to Him. To them He is a divine leader who brings eternal life and spiritual unity. Thus

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Jesus presents Himself, and thus also should He be received by His disciples. In the language of Professor Stalker, "They accept Him as He offers Himself to them and act accordingly." However widely opinions may differ respecting Jesus, the believer sees Him always the same wherever a believer is found. His relation to His followers roots deep in His own life and being and also in the life and being of God, the Father. His works like His words point upward to their divine source and attest the presence of a divine Person. Only thus could His relation to men be a means of restoring order in a disordered universe. Only thus could unity be established among intelligent, moral beings. Jesus offers no superficial means, no specious methods of securing this result, but such as are fundamental and always adequate. His agency records its action in the mind and heart, the conduct and character of the believer, whose spiritual oneness with the Father, through the Son, is distinctly traced in the life eternal, which he has received from its primal source.

As His enemies failed to arrest Him, so also they failed to arrest the progress of His teaching concerning the new moral order with its three elements—divine leadership present and all-embracing, eternal life as the believer's present inheritance, and spiritual unity, that note of harmony which rings true in the kingdom of God on earth and in heaven.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE DEITY OF CHRIST.

The humanity of Jesus was accepted without question by the people who had the opportunity to see and know Him. His humanity, like that of any man, was self-evidencing and required no other proof. Men knew Him as one who possessed the same nature as themselves. As a man He easily made room for Himself, and readily commanded a rightful recognition. If, indeed, He is a most remarkable man, He is in no sense abnormal, and in the compass of the eleventh chapter of John He speaks and acts in a manner that leaves nothing to be added in order to complete the perfect picture of His humanity.

The Deity of Christ, however, is a fact of a higher order and therefore required repeated manifestations and conclusive proofs before it could be accepted with perfect assurance. Here is a fact so new, so great, so extraordinary that men must be given ample opportunity to know it by the processes of observation and reflection. Deity is the fact to be determined and then fitted into our thought and life, His deity in His humanity, the two harmoniously associated and even organically united. His deity is deliberately unveiled before our eyes and makes its appeal to our minds and hearts, challenging our consideration and acceptance not merely as a matter of statement or argument, but especially

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as a self-revelation which carries with it self-evidencing power. Men must be taught not only by words of instruction, and convinced not only by logical argument, but also by practical demonstration. Why shall not the deity of Christ express itself as well as His humanity? Why shall it not manifest itself by means of its power and wisdom and love, and so declare the presence of a divine Person? If this be possible, may we not consider it morally necessary? Thus men are called upon to know His deity as well as His humanity. They should, therefore, face this great fact and assure themselves that our Lord acts in His own right when He exercises an authority and exerts a power that belong to God alone.

Thus we are brought face to face with the problem presented in this chapter and are given our opportunity to know God as He is revealed in Jesus Christ. If our minds can act with the same freedom exhibited in the text, they will surely grasp with some measure of appreciation and some degree of confidence the one great fact recorded there.

From His enforced retirement, Jesus returned to Bethany in answer to the appeal of Martha and Mary, and at the behest of duty, coming back to the field of His former activity as recorded in the tenth chapter. In the temple at Jerusalem He had asserted His unity with the Father, and now in Bethany, less than two miles distant and with many of the same auditors, He proceeds to manifest His deity in the most convincing way. His word must be sustained by His deed of demonstration. The



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believer must see the glory of God and the Son of God glorified, for doubt must be driven from the mind and heart and those who believe not must be left without excuse.

The practical importance of the deity of Christ demands this divine demonstration which Jesus is so glad to give. He desires to be all He is even in the midst of human life and in the circle of human relations. Human life evidently requires his divine presence, that part which lies beyond the tomb as well as that part which lies within the bounds of space and time. He is the master of it all, and the proof of His mastery becomes the proof of His deity. The power to recall a human being who had passed the portal of death, was accepted by friend and foe as unquestionably divine, and while we reach this climax of truth in the eleventh chapter, we find also a corresponding climax of error.

The public assertion of the deity of Jesus in chapter ten leads logically to the public proof which we find in the eleventh chapter. The evidence there offered should be sufficient to convince any candid mind that Jesus exercised a power that belongs to God alone. He prays, but it is "because of the multitude that standeth around I said it, that they may believe that Thou didst send Me." He is Himself the agent of resurrection. He exercises the power of recall over the human spirit; He acts in His own right and on His own responsibility, "I am the resurrection and the life," yet, as we should expect, He acts in harmony with the Father and as His representative. The return of Lazarus at His

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command reveals His complete control of the departed spirit as well as the dead and decaying body, and points unmistakably to the deity of Christ as its only explanation.

The return of Lazarus to this world and this life, at the call of Jesus, commonly called the resurrection of Lazarus, transports us in thought to a hill-top of vision from which we are able to survey human life as Jesus sees it. There are none who claim precedence here, none to divide His glory or dispute His power, for they are the glory and power of God. The human will is helpless when human hearts are hushed by bereavement and subdued by sorrow. Tears of grief distill like dew and flow from human eyes, while Jesus weeps in human sympathy and divine compassion. He weeps in the valley of the shadow of death, where human thought looks low and human life seems little, where the ties that bind spirit to spirit are vacated, if not dissolved by death. Behold Him there, for there thou shalt presently be, oh, man. See Him now as thou shalt surely see Him then, the sympathetic, the divine Christ. Hear Him now as you may hear Him then, for He it is Who commands the dead to come forth from the tomb, once more to enter the relations of life in the little home in Bethany, and above all, to be henceforth a living witness of the deity of our Lord.

There is a progressive revelation of Christ's glory which adapts it to the comprehension of men. It is manifested in life and character, in word and deed. It is expressed in personality, and then, lest man should lose the meaning, it is formulated in

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language. It comes to men through every avenue of approach. The presence and power of Jesus embrace the realm occupied by the human spirit here and hereafter, his entire being and his entire life, as the appropriate field of its manifestation. Nor does the glory of God become dim and distant as it sweeps the wide range of man's present existence or pierces the dark defile of death.

Jesus declares that there is a divine purpose in the sickness and death of Lazarus. They are permitted "for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." Sickness precedes death in the order of nature and the death is real but not final. It is subject to review. The thought of Jesus covers the whole case, and the outcome fully justifies His first statement. Men do, indeed, behold the glory of God when they see God supreme over life and death as both come within their knowledge and as both extend beyond their comprehension. God is never tasked by His acts or limited in His greatness and goodness. His glory is His own and challenges human recognition wherever and whenever its radiant beams reach the eyes of the heart. The Son of God is glorified by the exercise of His divine agency in behalf of Lazarus, who becomes an individual example of His universal interest in men and by His personal presence among men, even while He transcends them in character and being.

Can we question the divine purpose as stated by Jesus or the divine fulfilment as recorded by John? Is either unworthy of God? Are we surprised that Jesus reads events before they transpire just as we

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might read them after they occur? Only one difference need be noted, namely, He has a clearer and completer view before than we have after the event. He can tell better what will be than we can tell what has been. He holds in his hand the key to the whole situation, the whole realm of thought and being and life, and hence reads events in terms of divine thinking and intention as well as human aim and aspiration. His must therefore be the true reading which admits of no emendation or revision.

When Jesus announces His purpose to return to Judea to awake Lazarus out of sleep, a suggestive way of describing His task, His disciples offer a weighty reason why He and they should not go even on a mission so important and so urgent. Relentless opposition and even personal violence evidently awaited them there. They are themselves in danger of death at the hands of the Jews, and the death of Lazarus, moreover, has already been announced, certainly a dark prospect before the disciples. But Jesus sees more than they see: the resurrection of Lazarus, the demonstration of His own deity, the confirmation of their faith. From His viewpoint the duty far outweighs the danger. The privilege of restoring life outweighs the peril of losing life. "Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there to the intent that ye may believe: nevertheless let us go unto him." His action will be fully justified if only their faith answers to His revelation of Himself.

Jesus calls forth Martha's faith in Him and shows her its nullifying limitations. She believed He

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could have prevented the death of her brother if only He had been present before his death occurred. But now it seems too late to expect Him to do anything for her relief except to offer His tender sympathy. His absence was fatal, for according to her present thought, He was absent in mind as well as body. His real presence and divine power rendered no aid in this crisis of her experience. Her second article of faith declares her confidence in Jesus in a rudimentary form that admitted of immediate development. "Even now I know that whatsoever Thou shalt ask of God, God will give Thee." She already believes that His power in prayer is unlimited, that God answers every prayer He offers, that His mind moves in perfect harmony with the divine Mind.

But when Jesus says to her, "Thy brother shall rise again," she answers out of her present knowledge and faith and sorrow, "Yes, at the resurrection at the last day." He has found the limit of her faith in Him. She has stopped short of His deity, while He is patiently leading her on to this supreme conclusion and this final faith. Her suggestive words respecting His unlimited power in prayer reveals her faith in Him as One Who knows the way of approach to God and enjoys the divine favor. But the two are evidently not thinking the same thoughts about the same things. She thinks of death as having come in His absence and without His consent, while He thinks of it as a divine permission and appointment; she thinks of it as an irreversible fact, He as a conquered enemy subject to

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His power; she thinks of a future resurrection, He of a present one; she of his potential power with God, He of His divine power relieving her present need: she of His intimate personal relation to God, He of His essential deity.

He, therefore, offers Himself to her thought and defines Himself as the real answer to her present necessity. "I am the resurrection and the life." He eliminates the future as well as the present from His statement and shows that the living and the dead are alike related to Himself. I am the resurrection of the dead and the life of the living. Death cannot take advantage of His absence, lessen His life, or limit His Person. As God had spoken to Moses, so He says to her, "I am." He is here now and able now to do all He wills to do in her behalf, and the immediate resurrection of her brother comes within the scope of His divine power and His divine pleasure. Resurrection has become a part of His system of instruction, a part of His unanswerable argument in His own behalf, a part of His self-revelation. If, in this instance, it appears individual in its benefits and local in its interest, it, nevertheless, proves to be general in its value and application, being followed by a statement of universal as well as individual significance, "He that believeth though he die yet shall he live and he that liveth and believeth shall never die."

Jesus asks Martha to accept His statement with His interpretation of its meaning—a rather appropriate basis for meditation on the part of the modern thinker. If He really has a right to think as He

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does, and express His mind in words and deeds, He must be His own best interpreter. His language must reflect the depth of meaning contained in His life. Martha must rewrite her confession of faith in presence of her bereavement and in presence of her Lord, an oft repeated experience among men. In its revised form, her faith appreciates and appropriates its object better than ever before. She said unto Him, "Yea, Lord: I have believed that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, even He that cometh into the world." She confesses her relation to Him as her Lord, His Messiahship, His divine Sonship, His world-mission. Only here does Jesus rest His case, for only in this faith can the mind of man really rest or really receive the returning one whose death had been permitted for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

When Mary presents herself before Jesus, she addresses Him in the exact language used by her sister Martha. They are sisters in their affection for their brother and in their estimate of Jesus as a family friend; but according to the narrative, Mary did not require the same instruction Martha had received in order to welcome Jesus as the resurrection and the life and in order to welcome her returning brother when he came forth at Christ's command. The Jews must have noted the confidence of the sisters in Him and the free expression of their sorrow to Him. Such sorrow finds expression only before a deeper nature. They noted the tears of Jesus and took them to be the visible evidences of His wonderful love for Lazarus. They reason

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well, but some ask a question that expresses a timid faith or a lingering doubt. "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of him that was blind, have caused that this man should not die?" Their attitude of mind resembles that of the sisters in one respect at least—they can see no ground for expecting help after death has done its work. Time has sealed the verdict and time cannot be turned back in its course. Events are locked in historic connections and causal relations, and the human mind must bow in rational recognition of both. Men have no higher tests of the true and the possible than their system of thought and things affords.

Human reason and human faith find their limits, beyond which they are unable to proceed without divine aid. New facts are needed by the Jews and the sisters for the expansion of thought and the conception of Christ. Jesus presents these facts in due time with His own interpretation of them. He commands them to open the tomb, to which Martha offers objection because she thinks of the decaying body resting there and because she has not been able, as yet, to look for resurrection as the end of her grief, the confirmation of her faith, and the revelation of her Lord. Only when Jesus repeats His significant question, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believest, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" does she really face the great fact and permit the stone to be taken away. She has not persuaded Jesus to raise Lazarus from the dead, but Jesus has persuaded her to accept His divine



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ministry, receive her returning brother, and see the glory of God.

The prayer of Jesus, a prayer of thanksgiving to the Father, a prayer confessing dependence upon the Father, appeals for no special aid in so great a work, but rather lends its aid to the multitude to enable them to believe. Like the prayer of Elijah on Carmel, it testifies of the source of His power, and especially of the supreme relation of His life. He addresses Lazarus by name and commands him to come forth. "He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin." They are directed, who stand near, to do what remains to be done, "loose him and let him go." Jesus is the resurrection and the life, body, soul, and spirit unitedly answering in testimony to this truth. He speaks to God in prayer, to Lazarus in the grave, to living men around Him, as though all ranks of being and realms of life were within the compass of His voice! All answer Him in harmonious response. The grave gives up its dead and the people accept his return. God becomes a witness for Him Whom He has sent, that men may believe in Him. All answer Him, and shall I not hear His voice and respond in obedience? Shall I not know His deity and then reverently worship Him, as one who has seen His glory?

We are glad to know the immediate effects of this mighty miracle upon the minds of men. Some of the Jews believe, and some report to His enemies what they had witnessed. The Pharisees take ac-

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count of His superior power over the people, and resolve to destroy it by means of His death. It is the last and only remedy. They will not surrender their power or even subordinate it to one that is evidently greater. A prophecy of the high priest encourages them in this course of action. Organized evil seeks the sanctions of religion. The Pharisees propose to answer Him in terms of His own act and teaching. He called Lazarus from the tomb; they will lay Him in the tomb; He declared Himself the resurrection and the life; they will prove that He is neither; He disputed their supremacy; they will reaffirm and re-establish it. They will decree His death and thus arrest His influence and destroy His power over the people. When he lies cold and lifeless in the grave, this demonstration of His deity will lose its power, and they will be free to pursue their own path unhindered. Thus they read the event according to their own ardent anticipation, but regretfully discover after it occurred that it failed to conform to their reading. The death and resurrection of Jesus had exactly the opposite effect, being the final confirmation of the deity of Christ, a confirmation which was especially given to them for their enlightenment.

The power of Jesus is divine because His Person is divine. Power is, with Him, no mere temporary possession, but the attribute of His being and the act of His will. His power is divine because *He* is divine. In like manner *He is* the resurrection and the life in His own nature and as the agent of both. Jesus says, "I am," as God says it in the earlier dis-

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pensation, to express divine quality and character as well as self-existence, organic being, and personal life. How futile, then, to take His life in hope of thus conquering His divine power! His doctrine is organically related to His Person. And so resurrection appears to be a state of personality rather than an event in human life. Time and place cannot condition it because it belongs to the realm of the spirit and must be read in terms of the higher life.

If we think of resurrection as referring to man's existence after death in the full possession of all his powers; we find ourselves surveying another part of man's life over which Christ rules with divine authority. Christ is not limited by death or confined to the present life. He enters time from eternity and returns again to the timeless state of being, and hence He offers Himself to Christian faith as the resurrection and the life. It is the doctrine of the divine power, but more especially of the divine Person Who links us with God and with our own best future development. Deity has spoken, let humanity hear. If resurrection opens the gates for the King of glory to come in, shall we not behold with open eyes and claim a close view of this supreme Person? Shall we not rise to the full height of our own personality, and thus be better able to know Him and the power of His resurrection? Says a German writer, "Personality in distinction from individuality, is that which has taken up into itself what is of universal validity"—the very elements which Christianity so freely offers

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and so carefully cultivates. Resurrection as a racial possibility and promise appears in Christ, the new head of the race. For Him death is only possible as He Himself accepts it. He is not externally conditioned. His life is within, and when He comes back to man from the grave and from eternity, He brings light and immortality to light. If we accept the definition of eternal life given us by Rev. Henry S. Nash, "a kind of life wherein life completely controls the machinery of life," or that of Rev. D. W. Faunce, "that interior principle, the motions of which rule the exterior act," we are sure we have traced it to its source when we discover it in Jesus Christ. He is the life as He is the resurrection, each separately and both together as essential elements of His divine endowment.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### NATIONAL RECOGNITION AS KING OF ISRAEL.

The expression of the deity of our Lord in a manner suited to the apprehension of His hearers prepared their minds for their part in the great event which comes next in order in the course of John's laconic narrative. The period of retirement which intervenes, no doubt, serves to further the same end. Men were given time to meditate without opportunity for expression until His return to Bethany, where Mary anointed His feet, and also to Jerusalem, where He was publicly honored as the Messiah, where Greeks desire to see Him, and where Jesus reasserts His claims in brief forms of statement, but with all their essential content of thought.

The opposition of the chief priests and Pharisees had already assumed a fixed form and become a settled purpose which they cared not to conceal, though its one object was to take His life. After the prophecy of the high priest had been uttered, a prophecy which was easily fitted into their thought and theory concerning Jesus, after they had what seemed to be the sanction of religion, their aim was fixed, if not their course of action. "So from that day forth they took counsel that they might put Him to death," and, as a consequence Jesus could not safely walk among the people as before. But the approach of the Passover would, in their estima-

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tion, surely call Him out of His seclusion. "What think ye? That He will not come to the feast?" Active and alert, the chief priests and Pharisees propose to compel men to report His whereabouts "that they might take Him." They are ready to apprehend Him on sight as they now fully believe.

Not as previously in the midst of the feast, but six days before, Jesus came to Bethany where Lazarus was. In the privacy of the home He is honored by these grateful friends who can never forget His wonderful intervention and His wonderful manifestation of the glory of God. Who but Mary, the one who sat at His feet; who but Martha, the one who learned from Him the lesson of faith; who but Lazarus, the living witness of His deity, could at this time entertain Him at supper and anoint His feet in worshipful devotion? No visible halo encircles His head, but about Him gathers a group of devout hearts that rejoice in His presence and await His words of wisdom. His invisible kingdom is already coming, and His righteous reign makes righteous souls rejoice. He is the shepherd of the individual soul as well as the head of the human race. He is God's chosen one, the Messiah, the deliverer of His people. He is the harmony of heart and home and heaven, the harmony that is individual, social, universal, and that is here realized in this little family circle with only one note of discord, which rudely reminds us that we are yet on earth with its care and contention. "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred shillings and given to the poor?"

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Men may measure devotion to Christ and even Christ Himself with the wholly human standard of money; they may profess to know an object more worthy of human interest and aid; they may exalt one class of men above Christ, Who came to save all classes; but their view of Christ can never dampen or displace the devotion of the devout heart. The believer stands next to Christ, and His divine Personality means more to him than a specious argument inspired by worldly considerations. Men may offer their reason for doing what they desire to do when some holy soul has been actuated by some higher motive; they may not be candid enough to denounce noble acts and motives, while they are willing to offset them by presenting other motives and acts as equal or superior; they may assert their personal interest in the poor or some other class of society while they are only hiding the motive and the personality of Judas. John explains that the reason assigned is not the real reason that moved Judas, but his love of money, his character as a thief and his habit of appropriating public funds. Eternity cannot show more clearly the insincerity of Judas or the candor and consecration of Mary.

Art places about the head of the divine Christ a halo of light, while history places around Him a group of earnest, sincere spirits. The subjects of the King are also His associates! His laws are written in human hearts and His spirit breathes in living men! Invisible is His kingdom, yet real, as real as the spirit of man and as real as the Christ of God. Jesus defends the ministry of Mary as prophetic of

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His death and as an appropriate tribute of devotion to One Who will not always remain with them. The quiet home at Bethany affords a field for Christian fellowship and Christian co-operation within the confines of the kingdom of God as Christ has established it on the earth.

The common people of the Jews learn where He is and seek to see Him once more, and also Lazarus, "whom He had raised from the dead. But the chief priests took counsel that they might put Lazarus also to death." Beside the kingdom of Christ is the kingdom of His opposers, a real kingdom, organized, aggressive, and ready at any cost to maintain its own sovereignty and perpetuate its own existence. It assumes to be the kingdom of God, but God has not two kingdoms, but only one, and the assumption instead of the realization of God's kingdom is the contradiction of the truth and the rejection of the spirit of that kingdom.

The multitude seems to have forgotten for the moment the open threats and the double authority of the Jewish rulers. They have cherished their own thoughts under the leadership of Jesus, and now they openly honor Him as the Christ. His public entry into Jerusalem reflects the popular recognition of His kingship. He is more than a prophet to them, more than a religious teacher. They proclaim Him the King of Israel Whom they rejoice to recognize and to Whom they openly offer this spontaneous outburst of devotion. This public demonstration on the part of the people has its ground and source in their deliberate thought, their



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friendly feeling, and their religious purpose, all of which require expression. It conforms to prophecy and shows a divine inspiration and a divine guidance. It needs no external restraint or control. It links itself with the raising of Lazarus, and honors the One Who called him forth in a way He could accept. It is an appropriate human recognition of the deity of Christ as already demonstrated to the entire satisfaction of earnest, intelligent men.

Jesus enters Jerusalem, the holy city, as King of Israel, riding on an ass, just as any king or conqueror might have done, while He maintains the simplicity which placed Him in complete contrast with all earthly rulers. His unhindered progress is dignified, impressive, significant, no mere pageant calculated to impress the populace, but the purposed presentation of this divine Person in His official character by which He is related to all men. Hence men are not mere spectators, but have their part in honoring Him as King. The event had been predicted by Zechariah with historic accuracy of statement and vividness of description. Or shall we say Jesus deliberately fulfilled this prophecy contrary to His ordinary habit of avoiding all public display? Perhaps we prefer to adjust prophecy to Him rather than to adjust Him to prophecy, for history never changes Him, but He steadily changes history. For once, at the appropriate moment and for the accomplishment of a great end, the multitude honors Him as the King of Israel, and for once He graciously accepts the honor because it is in perfect

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keeping with His character and because it furthers His great mission among men.

An eminent writer teaches us that the proper method for man to adopt in his effort to know God is recognition and not construction. Such must have been the method of the first disciples, whose one difficulty was to follow their great Leader in His thought and life. They were incapable of forming a true conception of Christ independently, just as men always are, and always will be. Personality calls for recognition, especially such as here moves before us. Even His resolute enemies seem on this occasion to have accorded Him a certain silent recognition. They offer no resistance, contrary to their preconcerted plan. Even the disciples of Jesus fail to appreciate the full significance of this occasion until after the ascension of our Lord. Then the deity of Christ was ascendant in their thoughts and became the easy explanation of an otherwise mysterious event.

Once more the Pharisees were outdone on what seemed to them their own ground, and say among themselves, half in self-reproach and half in self-incitement, "Behold how ye prevail nothing; lo, the world is gone after Him." They failed to anticipate the movements of Jesus or even make any effort to prevent them. The co-ordination of agencies and the elimination of opposition cannot be explained as purely fortuitous or the result of human sagacity. There must be a higher co-operating and co-ordinating agency. The kingship of Christ was publicly declared to the Jewish people and to

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all nations, as such a fact ought to be proclaimed, because the Person of Christ has all the reality of man and God, and the work of Christ in the world is no fanciful dream, no fiction of a disordered brain, but both are great facts of history and great truths of universal interest to men. No man can know Christ as he can and ought to know Him without knowing Him as his King, and hence Christ must reveal Himself as such, the King of Israel, the Sovereign of all believers in all nations and in all ages.

The movement of many minds in harmonious recognition has its value, but the thought of the one great Mind must guide and govern us. What are the Master's thoughts, what are His interpretations, what does He say of these events and these momentous days? He begins each movement in advance, and He must close each argument and each advance movement. He is the vanguard and the rear guard of His people, the pillar of fire and cloud under whose leadership they can proceed in safety. In doctrine, as in life, He leads His own where, unaided, they could not go, and unattended they could not remain. He sitteth king forever, for men forever need Him as their spiritual Sovereign.

According to the twelfth chapter, Jesus is practically free to do and say what He will. Perhaps it is the calm that precedes the storm. But He is the same in actual victory as in apparent defeat. The opposition of those who have not believed has not driven Him into extremes and excesses of any kind, nor does its present removal unbalance Him from

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the opposite cause. Evidently He is not dependent on any outside agency for the poise of His personality or the consistency of His mind. He is the honored guest in the home at Bethany, the King of Israel in Jerusalem, and the Son of man according to His own announcement, the second Adam, the real head of the human race, God's representative among men, and man's representative before God. Surely He is coming to His own at last, and we are permitted to have an unobstructed view of Him as He is and as He ought to be known by us.

The doctrine of the last public discourse of Jesus is the doctrine of life, holy life and sacrificial death, a life and death for Him and them and all men. He thinks of Himself as the Son of man, Who holds a central place in the economy of grace. He declares His identity with humanity and at the same time His place at the head of humanity, being at once really man and representatively man, not simply one among men, but one Who was the life of all, Who was, in fact, the one real man because He was the one ideal man.

His teaching is not more central than before, but He and His hearers are drawing nearer to that one great, central deed, His sacrificial death, which brings Him into relation, once more, with every soul. They share His words of instruction concerning the life which they should find as His followers. They have their place and their part, and they must accept the one and fulfill the other intelligently. They, too, must die in order to live. This principle is plainly written in nature and has its

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illustration in the grain of wheat which dies to produce its harvest. How much more, then, are men to look for it in the realm of mental and moral and spiritual life? Nor does He claim exemption from this law, but characterizes His death as His glorification. It is not destruction, but the condition of fruitful life. Any man may follow Him here and by self-renouncing devotion to Him keep his life unto life eternal. Here men may become His servants, His followers, His associates, and be honored as such by the Father.

For men, His words are freighted with hope and comfort, but for Himself they contain the bitter pangs of physical death and the unknown sorrows of a world's Savior. "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour." That alone would bring relief, but His prayer is not for deliverance. "But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name." He will omit no essential part of His life and work. Men make such omissions without estimating the consequences. Jesus never does. Life is a plain path before Him and a single principle within Him. Men need salvation from sin, and this Jesus provides by His own sacrificial death. Men need a further revelation of His deity, and this He affords by means of His suffering humanity. A voice out of heaven repeats His words approvingly and confirms His course of thought and action. The multitude heard that voice, while the immediate circle distinguish the articulate sounds, and all are impressed with a sense of the supernatural and

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the evident nearness of the spiritual world. God's thunder awakens the human soul to things divine and eternal, for which it has unused powers of apprehension and unlimited powers of appreciation.

Jesus hears this voice which He understands both as regards its source and its significance. How simple and satisfactory His explanation, "This voice hath not come for My sake but for your sakes." He regards it not as thunder or even the voice of an angel, but just as it purports to be, the voice of the Father in response to His spoken prayer, "Father, glorify Thy Name." Already men are being taken into partnership with Him and God in heaven regards them with paternal interest.

Racial relations are required to fill out the thought of Jesus. He enters individual life and social life and national life, but the life of the race concerns Him. His greatness must be measured extensively as well as intensively. "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." The rightful Ruler cannot be excluded from His own kingdom when He comes in person to attract all men unto Himself. If He is lifted up by those who reject Him, it is for the judgment of this world, that sin may see its final standard of condemnation. If He is crucified as a sinner, it is that He may become the sinless Savior of the world. If He dies on the cross, it is that He may live beyond it where death has no power over Him. If He is slain in shame and dishonor, it is that He may attract men to holy life and divine service. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men

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unto Myself." His death enables men to see Him at the center of human life, with no other to dispute His claim or discredit His divine glory. This racial man must fill out His racial relations. He must die in this public manner because His salvation is for all mankind. He must die in presence of the people, for He is not only an individual with family and social relations, not only a religious teacher and a national leader, but also and above all, a world's Redeemer, for Whom no quiet death-bed was provided, no sorrowful yet sympathetic home scene, but an uncurtained world scene, awful in its intensity of agony, in which both God and man are profoundly interested.

The multitude think of the Christ as one Who abides forever; Who remains to rule over His people, and hence they cannot reconcile the statement of Jesus respecting His death with their conception of His Messianic character and work. If the Son of man must be lifted up, who, then, is this Son of man? Their implied thought is that He cannot be the Christ. Jesus does not directly answer their inquiry, but says to them that their present wisdom is to walk in the light while He, Who is the light, remains with them, in order to escape the pursuing darkness and in order to avoid losing their way. He asks them to believe in the light while it is with them, that they may become sons of light. They are concerned about Him, while He is concerned about them. They do well to take up their own case, for Jesus has made possible for them a sonship they can realize, and in their realization they will better un-

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derstand Him as well as themselves. Only as sons of light can they properly appreciate Him as the light, the prime condition of logical thinking, right conduct, and worthy life. As the light of men, as the head of the race, as the Savior of the world, He abides forever.

We may wonder that Jesus anticipates His death and accepts it again and again as His appointed duty, but another state of mind ensues when we consider His death not only as a historic event, but also as a spiritual victory over evil. He knows the hour of His glorification and prepares Himself for it as well as those for whom He endures it. He never calls it His hour of disgrace, because to Him it is a nobler thing. How could death overtake Him unawares? How could it be to Him other than just what it was? He anticipated it in all its significance to Himself as the Son of man, and to mankind as sinful and out of harmony within itself and with every rank and order of worthy being. His life, when apparently lost, becomes more fruitful than ever before, for while He attracted a limited number before, now He "draws all men unto Himself."

A true interpretation of the life of Jesus affords a correct explanation of every human life. His philosophy elucidates life from first to last, reconciles all the facts in the case, and covers the case as a whole. If Jesus dies to save men, men must die to be saved. The salvation of any man comes by the voluntary loss of his own life. He, too, dies to live. The grain of wheat can multiply and live



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again in perpetual reproduction only by its death in the moist earth. Thus man loses his life that he may find it, but for him his new life is a higher type and a more enduring kind. Thus the philosophy of Jesus touches the center of life, both His and ours, and thus also He comes close to us, not merely in the accidents of time and space and bodily presence, but above all in the great essential facts of life and being and personality.

Do we wonder that Jesus hides Himself from the people because many of them failed to believe after seeing His signs? Gracious teaching, welcome truth, conclusive argument, divine acts of deliverance, a sinless life, a presence alike gentle and holy, can all these call forth only an ephemeral faith? The prophet Isaiah long before predicted this failure of faith to answer as it should the divine appeal. Only too few believe and too few achieve a radical faith. Only too few appreciate the revelation that has been made, and hence Jesus withdraws from them temporarily. Our psychology mingles the ingredients of our conduct and thereby fixes the facts of history. What can be done except this, remove the unappreciated opportunity? Isaiah even declares that the Lord blinds the eyes of the unbelieving and hardens their hearts, lest they should see and perceive and turn and be healed. The inverting of the soul brings its own punishment and also the divine disapproval. The coming of the Christ offers the supreme opportunity to know God and also an equal opportunity to reject Him, and the prophet sees both as he looks into the future.

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“Nevertheless even of the rulers many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.” Their fear was stronger than their faith, and their faith, under apostolic analysis, showed the presence of one exotic element, “they loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God.” In their conduct, men are guided by reasons of some kind, however low, and governed by motives, however unworthy.

The last paragraph of the twelfth chapter is a brief summary of His teaching without controversial tone or tendency. He declares His relation to the believer, to all men, and to the Father. The man who believes on Jesus believes on Him Who sent Him, and the man who sees Jesus sees the One Who sent Him. The vision of God has been made possible to every human spirit, and the relation of faith has been made real to every believing heart. The man is not limited above. Religious faith and spiritual sight have God as their ultimate object, not as an abstract idea, but as a concrete person. Thus the believer realizes his relation to God through Jesus Christ.

As the moral light of men and the divine Savior of the world, Jesus comes to men who are in darkness and who need salvation. He awakens faith, that all He is may have its proper effect in a saving and regenerating ministry. Not as a judge does He now come to the world, but men who reject Him now will be judged by His words at the last great day. His words, divine in source and signif-

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icance, which offer salvation now will call down condemnation then. They can be disregarded now, but not then. Truth abides, and men who have no place for truth in mind and heart must eventually find a great gulf fixed between themselves and the truth which they have deliberately disowned.

Not from Himself alone, does Jesus speak, but from the Father also, Whose divine right and authority He always honors. "The Father that sent Me, He hath given Me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life eternal." This commandment governs the speech of Jesus and keeps Him in harmony with heaven while He ministers to men on earth. It contains eternal life as the acorn contains the oak. After showing that He is in perfect harmony with the Father, and that His doctrine is derived from the divine command, He places His seal upon His words, "so I speak." No doubt distresses Him, no fear haunts Him, no regret overtakes Him.

If indeed Jesus is the king of Israel, as He was publicly proclaimed; if His deity was demonstrated by the raising of Lazarus; if His teaching and His work bore steadily toward this supreme revelation of Himself; can we question His conclusions or doubt His character? Does not doubt stand condemned, and is not faith fully vindicated? What seems hard to men ought to be easy, and what seems easy ought to be hard. The philosophy of Jesus, like His religion, is divine in content. God cannot be eliminated from the human mind without con-

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structing contradictory conceptions and reaching irrational conclusions. Hence His doctrine contains the essential elements of the final philosophy and the very substance of the absolute religion. He is to mankind and to each individual man, all He represents Himself to be, and when this truth took possession of the people, the national recognition of Jesus became possible, harmonizing with prophetic announcement, with divine providence, and with the racial conceptions of Jesus Himself.

Thus we have come, step by step, to the climax of His manifestation as the promised Messiah to Israel and to the world. The first great movement in the Gospel of John is closely followed by another course of activity and another climax of self-revelation in the realm of personal religious life which we now proceed to consider.

**PART III**  
**The Spiritual Leader**



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### INDIVIDUAL DEALING AND PERSONAL MINISTRY.

The transition from the Messianic manifestation to the spiritual revelation of our Lord is made in John's accustomed way. He takes up a new fact which leads on to the new order of events. In the briefest possible time he proceeds with his portrayal of Jesus in the changed conditions and relations. His Christ is a living, moving Person, Whose surroundings and associations become the screen on which His figure is reflected. We have just seen Him riding into Jerusalem in the presence of a rejoicing multitude, and now we are to behold Him dealing with each disciple separately in order to bring each one into closer fellowship with Himself.

Jesus never saves men in the mass. He always individualizes them and deals with them, one by one, however impossible this method may seem to a finite mind. He separates them from the multitude and singles them out before Him, as when He says to Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me," a statement of deep, personal import and also a truth for general application. Every case, however ordinary, requires the personal ministry of Jesus. One by one Jesus washes the disciples' feet, thus rendering a service which He assures them they will subsequently understand. "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt understand hereafter."

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They may need this lesson in individual dealing and personal ministry immediately after the public recognition which seemed to promise so much and which actually yielded so little according to their view. They were apt in seeking honor and greatness, but less apt in humility, that Christian virtue which no heathen religion has been able to imitate or even teach successfully. Jesus has never been charged with borrowing this virtue from some other moral and religious teacher. A doubt can be raised concerning almost any truth or teaching in a prejudiced or otherwise limited intelligence, but truth is its own vindication, and asks no aid of evil or error, as it could receive none in case it were offered. Truth cannot stultify itself, but abides in honor even when it walks in humility.

The washing of the disciples' feet by Jesus is an act worthy of Him in every way; the very conception, the personal performance, and the subsequent interpretation. His disciples must learn from Him the secret of His life among men, His individual dealing and personal ministry, both of which are made possible by His humility, that virtue which shines brightest in the greatest souls. The greatest must minister to those who are less, down to the very least, as the means of their uplifting and as a matter of choice and personal interest that has no flavor of condescension. Such is the economy of grace. Surely no dignity is lost and no divine relation destroyed, but both shine clearer in the estimation of each one to whom the Master ministers as a servant.



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First, we are invited to enter the wonderful consciousness of Christ. He is perfectly conscious of Himself in His human and in His divine nature. He knows Himself on all sides, and in every relation. He is not the victim of doubt or forgetfulness. There has been no lapse of memory, no failure of judgment, no reversion of thought, but He is all He has declared Himself to be in person and character and work. In His dignity as man's redeemer and God's representative He takes up this menial task. He knows Himself as man's redeemer, and hence describes Himself in reference to men, to evil beings, and to God, the Father.

His thoughts gather under three separate heads. Under the first He declares that His hour has come, that hour of death so often present to His mind, that hour of which He was so completely conscious, that hour which marks His departure from this world and His entrance into the presence of God as man's Savior and Intercessor. Under the second head He declares that He had loved His own that were in the world, and that He had loved them to the end. He knew the motions of evil also, and that the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas to betray Him. Under the third head we are told that Jesus knew "that the Father had given all things into His hands and that He came forth from God" and returned to God.

Thus Jesus knows Himself. Thus He is conscious of Himself in view of all He has stated concerning Himself, and more conscious than men can conceive from their knowledge of themselves. Thus

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He girds His mind in thought before He girds his body with the towel. His greatness, fully revealed in His own knowledge of Himself, finds expression in His humility by means of a menial service He refuses to omit in a single instance. Each disciple must receive individually the personal ministration of Jesus, however lowly it may appear. Jesus must look in upon man's sin and weakness in order to save him from them. The lesser consciousness must be illuminated by the larger, and as the lesser cannot measure up to the larger in its greater intensity and wider range, the larger must come to the lesser. Christian humility shines with its native luster when the greatest ministers to the least, when Christian character expresses itself in Christian service, and when the dignity of divine personality bends over potential greatness.

Christ is conscious of His own greatness in His individual dealing with men and His personal ministry to them, and His humility is in no sense external and unreal, but rather offers free course to His human sympathy and His divine love. He interprets His example that they may follow it and that it may have the same significance for all men. He enters into their field of knowledge and even into their consciousness, where they consider, appreciate, and understand, where their mental processes proceed, their conclusions are framed, and their characters formed. First, He calls their attention to His relation to them and their relation to Him. "Know ye what I have done unto you?" His act is significant and worthy of their thoughtful con-

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sideration. They call Him Teacher and Lord, and as such He has ministered to them in the most menial service, with the highest possible motive. In like manner should they minister to each other individually and personally with Christian humility, based on Christian consciousness. Second, He calls their attention to their relation to each other. His ministry to them argues their ministry to each other, "ye also ought to wash one another's feet." His ministry is universal, while theirs is partial. Theirs, like His, may appear menial, but it should be inspired by the highest motives. He gives His own act as their example. They are to be real ministers, like Himself, offering real worth in real service. Humility marks the manner and reveals the mind of greatness as it comes alongside of littleness, while on the other hand it shows a right relation to its Lord and thus enables the free spirit to realize a true self-hood.

In the family of God, the servant must learn to know his place with reference to his superior. The servant of Jesus is not greater than Jesus nor is Jesus greater than Him Who sent Him. The principle is thorough-going, and its right application is the basis of personal happiness. There is evident danger of the servant thinking that he is greater than his lord and acting accordingly, but his happiness, as well as his real and relative greatness, lies in faithfully doing what Jesus here so faithfully teaches. Can we think of Jesus considering His own little company of twelve and not mentioning the one among them who possessed a different spirit,

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who served as His betrayer and who was chosen with this end in view? This one who shared the teaching of Jesus and every ministry until this hour lifted his heel in opposition as deliberately as though his darkened heart was completely hidden from the mind of the Master. Our Lord foretells this defection that the rest may have no share in it, but may believe in Him by reason of it. With double emphasis He teaches them a great principle which applies to their ministry as believers. "He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me." Men say the lower must minister to the higher. Jesus says the higher must minister to the lower. This is the mission of greatness. The least cannot be satisfied without the greater and the greatest in the one ascending scale. The greatest can be received by the less and even the least, and the less, if not the least, can take up the task of making known the greatest. Such is this personal ministry which was instituted by Jesus Christ and which could be instituted by Him alone.

When we observe that the greatness of the Christian appears in close connection with his humility, we discover a necessity of being as well as a necessity of thought. The most worthy can be the most humble, and, as Christians, they should claim their privilege. Virtue must be voluntary to be real. Will is one ingredient as well as intelligence. A true self-realization precedes a true humility; a true humility prepares the man for a true ministry; a

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true ministry is necessary to produce or maintain a true Christian brotherhood.

The individual interest and the personal relation of Jesus to His disciples have their contrast in the betrayal. Opposition is active if not altogether intelligent. It operates in its own limited sphere and seeks to secure its own ends and to perpetuate its own life. It fails to take a broad view because it is itself narrow and limited and because it deliberately refuses to accept the broader views of the great Teacher. A man's way is always right in his own eyes because it harmonizes with his own system of thinking, but the outcome may show results which, to him, even, are entirely unsatisfactory, unexpected, and perhaps incomprehensible.

The men who surround Jesus have their system of thought and their theory of life, their morality and religion, their faith and their philosophy. Their minds are by no means blank sheets of paper on which the great Teacher can record truth for the first time. Rather are they like old manuscripts that have been used again and again and yet are to receive another imprint. What wonder if the teaching of Jesus became confused with what was already there? What wonder if the old persists and at times even contradicts the new? Judas tries to harmonize all that comes within his knowledge on the basis of his own being, and asks conformity to his idea and his will as dogmatically as any confessor of the faith. Evil comes to its maturity, and when it appears in a personality finally formed, that personality asserts the supremacy of its own wis-

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dom and even its own will. The presence of Jesus has no power to change the character of Judas or check his personal development. The effect appears to be the very opposite. The betrayal of Jesus by Judas gives us a full view of evil in its maturity. It assumes and asserts its right to co-operate with the enemies of Jesus, to exist independently of Him, to act in almost open opposition to Him, to work out its idea, whatever of injury may accrue to others. In asserting its right to exist, evil asserts its right to defeat or even destroy the good.

When Jesus thought of His betrayal so near at hand and so soon to be enacted, "He was troubled in spirit." His announcement, "Verily, verily I say unto you that one of you shall betray Me," reveals again His individual dealing. For this one He had no further ministry, only one sad request, one sorrowful command. He knew the growing estrangement of this one, who was called to be an apostle, and we may well believe that He is yet sensitive concerning his ingratitude, his irresponsiveness, and his sin, for Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. He has disowned no sinner, but a sinner has disowned Him and closed forever the path of divine approach and the heart of divine love. Jesus never ruthlessly frightens His followers. The disciples looked at one another, doubting of whom He spoke, each unwilling to believe that he could do such a deed. Jesus therefore designates His betrayer by a significant act, and thus relieves the needless suspense of the eleven respecting their own innocence. He deals with the eleven as well as the one. John

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tells us that after Judas is thus pointed out as His betrayer, "Satan entered into him." This completes his combination with evil. Why should he longer remain in the company of Christ? Jesus therefore said unto him, "What thou doest, do quickly." He carries out his own design while he obeys the command of Jesus, which in no way interferes with his mental state or purposed action. When he goes forth from that little company "it is night," with no returning day to revive a dying hope or offer one more opportunity of salvation to a soul which has sunk down into the unfathomed depths of dark despair.

John speaks of Satan with the same certitude and accuracy of knowledge that he exhibits in describing any other personality. His mind harbors no doubt respecting Satan as an evil being, opposed to Christ, active among men, and ready to associate himself with any man whose will bends before him as it should bow in submission to God. A modern candidate for popular leadership and popular applause has blandly asserted that "the man who believes in a personal devil is one." His epigram cannot cover the fallacy and the falsehood of his assertion except in the estimation of the unwary or the evil-minded. A man no more becomes a personal devil by believing that a personal devil exists, than a man becomes a saint by believing in the existence of a saint. Intellectual faith alone cannot determine being. The demons believe intellectually in a personal God, but show no tendency to become like Him—they only shudder. The will is shaken by

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Jesus teaches His disciples as little children to value His presence, which is so soon to be withdrawn from them. What He had said to the Jews, He now says to them, "Whither I go ye cannot come." They are to remain here for personal ministry. He links His life to theirs by a new commandment, which links life to life in the Christian brotherhood and thus conclusively and continually demonstrates to all men, whether inside or outside of that brotherhood, that all who share His life are His disciples. His religion rests on no ulterior aids. It must be known by what it really is and by what it actually does. His love to them becomes the measure of their love to each other, easily transcending the old commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This, then, is His commandment, which is given to them and which becomes the distinguishing mark of discipleship the world over.

The religion of Jesus is a religion of essentials, and not of incidents and accidents; it appeals to individuals primarily and not to masses; it is embodied in personal relations and not in common practice and established forms. It lives and moves on the level of Christ's own life and never sinks below it even in its humblest ministry, while it cannot rise above it in its highest exaltation of duty and devotion.

One more instance of individual dealing and personal ministry closes the thirteenth chapter of the Gospel. Peter inquires of the departure of Jesus, Who assures him that he cannot follow Him now,



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but he shall follow afterwards. Peter believes his devotion is perfect, and therefore he can follow Him wherever He may go. As he reads his own heart he asserts, "I will lay down my life for Thee," believing his statement was true beyond contradiction or correction. But Jesus reads his mind with a very different result. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied Me thrice." Thus Jesus foretold Peter's denial, which is not the same as betrayal, not the absence of faith, but the failure of faith. Peter's profession has the form of truth, but lacks the substance, such as Jesus placed in His assertion, I am the truth. It lacked the meaning imparted by the resolute will and the personality as a whole, as he soon discovered by sad experience. But Jesus must show men who they really are if He is ever to make them what they really ought to be. He must enter their inner life and reveal its hidden depths. John reviews this process and places the several agents concerned in the light where men may see them, Jesus, Judas, Satan, and Peter; Jesus as the head of the race; Judas betraying Him into the hands of men who are not racial, however proudly they profess to be religious; Satan as an active agent of evil, personal in being and life, able to influence men and the one great opposer of Christ; Peter who thought he knew himself, but who found that Jesus knew him far better. Downward into the individual human consciousness and upward into the conscious life of God, Jesus moves unhindered, the Savior of the soul to whom He offers His direct in-

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dividual attention and His sympathetic, personal ministry.

Thus far we have seen evil and good in contrast and in conflict. Neither has driven the other from the field. In the thirteenth chapter we see them separating and each cultivating its own thoughts. The conflict is not over, but each has its own ends and aims, and these are more clearly defined than ever before. In the fourteenth chapter a new development of life engages our attention. The good unfolds unhindered, except by the slow processes of the human mind in its effort to receive and assimilate the truth. The good is not dependent upon the evil nor is it conditioned by it. Its life and being are its own, for it has a place and a kingdom.

“You know how love is incompatible

With falsehood—purifies, assimilates

All other passions to itself,”

says the poet, and thus it builds its own kingdom out of its own life, both of which are spiritual and eternal.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### PERSONAL RELIGION OR THE DIVINE LIFE OF MEN.

The deep personal interest in His disciples which was manifested by Jesus and which we find recorded by John in his thirteenth chapter, leads us logically to their response as found in the fourteenth, a response which Jesus must claim and cultivate in order to raise it to its proper level and in order to infuse into it its proper life. The ministry of Christ has its fruitage in Christian manhood. If He defines in words, He also establishes in fact the relation we call religion. He brings men individually into right relation with God, and as a next step unites them in the sacred bonds of Christian fellowship. The individual Christian originally precedes the Church, but he can be perfected only in the society of believers. Thus the Christian religion is a personal fact from the very beginning, and so continues in the organized body of the Church, which recognizes personal religion as its object, if not also its origin.

The religious unit concerns Christ most deeply and definitely, and therefore receives His first consideration. He deals with men individually, and thus prepares the way for personal religion with its personal knowledge and personal experience blended in equal parts. He leads His disciples right into the realm of moral and spiritual life and enables them to know themselves as moral and spir-

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itual beings. He greatly enhances their self-consciousness by His revelation of God as Father and by bringing them into right relation to Him.

We are accustomed to think of man as soul or spirit without regarding these as different in essence and origin. When we speak of the soul, we mean the embodied life of man, and when we speak of the spirit we mean the life of man as it comes from God. The former operates within human limits, while the latter has a wider range of activity. The spirit appears as the principle of life, and when this principle is spoken of as conditioned by the body, it is called the soul, but when it is considered in itself or as coming from God, it is called the spirit. When the spirit objectifies itself and knows that it thinks and feels and wills, it attains self-consciousness, the characteristic fact in what is called personality. By individuality we mean that original endowment which constitutes and characterizes any particular man. By personality we mean the selfhood as reconstituted or confirmed by its own choices amid the various educative processes of experience. Personal religion, therefore, covers the whole field of personal choice, all those activities and agencies that help to determine the kind and quality of manhood.

To be sure, our conceptions as thus stated are derived from the Scriptures. We find a certain pleasure, however, in the assurance that our most advanced knowledge harmonizes with the first great facts. We note with new interest that the personality of Jesus appears to be the immediate source

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of Christian experience. He mingles with men, touching them in unnumbered ways in order to call forth their minds and hearts. Surrounded by His disciples, who are in full sympathy with Him, Judas having previously departed, Jesus speaks with greater freedom, while His interested hearers follow Him more closely as He seeks to lift them to the level of His own thought and life. How vividly He describes those spiritual states and defines those personal relations which constitute religious life as He knows it. The whole realm of spiritual realities lies open before Him and He freely admits each earnest inquirer who seeks to enter there. His superior nature makes its appeal and leaves its imprint while He invited His disciples to realize the religious, the spiritual, the divine life, which He makes possible for them as beings who, by creation, bear the image of God.

The prospect of His departure spells disaster to His disciples according to their best knowledge and their unaided power to forecast the result. He has been the One among them, the One Who called them and led them and taught them; the One Who won the interest of the people and Who contended with relentless opposers; the One Who alone could carry forward the unfinished task and bring it to its completion. They are troubled while He is saying to them, "Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in Me." Believe in Me the same as you believe in God, absolutely and not relatively as you have learned to believe in men. Thus He endeavors to free their hearts from trouble,

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for how can they think freely with this burden resting upon them and this influence continually affecting them? How can they appreciate the higher life unless it answers their present need and unless it has already begun within them? Faith in God and faith in Christ are principles of the mental, moral, and religious life which will sustain their hearts and dismiss their trouble, however real it appears to them. Is he not thinking of their future, as well as His own, and does He not bear upon His heart the burden of their present disappointment? His departure has no power to separate Him from them in the deeper and more real sense, but links His life yet closer to theirs. As He thinks for them, loves them, leads them, and fills out His personal relation to them, so they must respond to Him in thought and affection and will, thus completing those deep personal bonds of fellowship that need never be vacated. Again and again, in this chapter, He asks them to believe in Him, first in order to clear up the inner atmosphere, then to assure their minds once more that He is related to the Father in the unity of the life of God; next that they may do the works He does and even greater works than these, and lastly that their faith may be strengthened as a result of His thoughtful interest in foretelling these things, a future effect with both a present and a future cause. As He opens His mind and heart to His disciples they can only respond to Him according to the present measure of their own minds and the present devotion of their own hearts.

Jesus assumes that men know how to believe,

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even if they are not able to define faith as a mental act or describe it as a personal attitude. Experience teaches them lessons they could not otherwise learn, and the religious teacher must rely upon human nature as adapted to his message. But Christian faith can be defined in terms of our ordinary thinking. It is one act, which, for our better understanding, may be divided into three parts: First, the intelligent perception of Christ in His real nature; second, the trustful commitment of one's self to Him, so that, by our own free choice, our life mingles with His and His life with ours; third, the complete acceptance of Christ in mind and heart as the One by Whom we are justified and sanctified and even glorified in anticipation. The word "faith" gathers up in itself the total response of man to that appeal of God which we call His saving grace.

The subject of the fourteenth chapter calls for private discussion rather than public discourse. The audience must be limited and also selected in order that the subject may be developed and properly appreciated. The great Teacher always speaks with wise reference to His auditors. He never fails to bring His subject within their mental grasp. But even with the most favorable conditions we see how slow these first disciples are to appreciate the significance of the Master's words because they are slow to enter the Master's world. If only they could think as the Master thinks, in conceptions cast in the molds of His mind, in terms of a divine life which is necessary for them if not natural to

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them, and in the logic of those life-relations that link God to man, they would rejoice as their relation to the Christ, to the Father, and to the Comforter is set forth as real and present and enduring. Students they are, but not masters. Still must they learn from the lips of Jesus before they can teach or even rest content in their present knowledge. The trinitarian teaching of Jesus leaves its permanent impression on our minds as He describes God in three different terms and shows how these three Persons touch man and minister to him in the process of his redemption. God is enlisted in the totality of His being, since nothing less could reach the result. The disciples are taught to discover their relation to God at every point of approach and to know Him as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Their life is to be based on this deepest thought of God, and thus this deepest doctrine of the Christian system becomes the most practical because it is the most personal.

Jesus invites His disciples to take charge of their own hearts and fix once for all the object of their faith. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me." You can put trouble out of this sanctuary and keep it out by this one sovereign remedy. You can center your soul upon Christ and God, and thus clarify its atmosphere and enable it to realize itself in its inner life and in its spiritual relations. The man who believes in God has a secure basis on which to rest his reason and his will. As long as these fundamental relations remain, he can be free from trouble within.



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God leads an untroubled life, and Christ is God very near and very sympathetic and very knowable. He proposes to communicate to men the communicable elements of His life, so that a man can be in harmony with himself because he is in harmony with Christ, the Savior of men, and with God, the world-ground as the metaphysician would say. Surely there can be no better way to come into harmony with other men of like faith and practice or with the progressive and providential movements of history, or indeed the whole universe of God. Let not your heart be troubled by any event or any person, least of all by yourself. You are the divinely appointed guardian of the charmed circle of your own inner life, which should be divinely peaceful under the supervision of the soul itself, and, above all, the protecting care of God.

Jesus leaves no task unfinished, no teaching incomplete, no doctrine only half developed. If He proposes peace as the atmosphere of the interior life, He proposes peace also as its environment. He goes to prepare a place for men who live the divine life and feel out of place where they are. His proposition has behind it all He is as the Word, the Creator of all things, and the Associate of God. He is a being of eternity temporarily abiding in the tent of time. As the author of the fourth Gospel has stated in the most positive terms that the personal existence of Christ preceded His earthly life, so also he is equally positive with reference to Christ's return to God and His heavenly task in the interest of His earthly disciples. Christ

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is not less than consistent, and if His followers share His view, their hearts will harbor no anxiety because of His departure. If the immediate prospect is depressing, the distant view is inspiring in the highest degree. They are to follow Him into this invisible realm. He contemplates no permanent separation, but proposes a future fellowship that will be far more intimate than that which they have here enjoyed.

His disciples cannot conceive how they can come to Him in His heavenly life and glory. Their earthly conceptions of life and being still control them, and so Jesus states once more His value for the human spirit. I am the way, the truth, and the life. In His own Person He is the way to God just as He is the truth of God and the life divine. His relation to men is based on His divine and human personality. As God comes to men in Christ, men come to God in Christ. How could it be otherwise? Here God and man may meet on friendly terms and in friendly converse. The knowledge of Christ is the knowledge of God, and seeing Christ is seeing God. The divine life of men can be explained only in terms of His life and their being has its reference to His being. Earthly conceptions fall short of spiritual meanings as earthly facts fall short of spiritual realities, and only as the disciple rises into the divine life can he fully realize that his personal relation to Christ covers the question under consideration.

Thus Jesus is vitally related to His disciples on the one hand, and on the other He is most inti-

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mately related to the Father. His disciples can know this unity with the Father, since the Father acts in and through Him. His words and works spring from the Father as their ultimate source, and hence He demands faith in Himself as related to the Father in the unity and fellowship of the life of God. Let the believer consider also that he shall do the same and even greater works than these as a direct result of Christ's complete unity with the Father, a unity which really re-enforces His power among men. Thus the works of the believer forever attest the unity of Christ with the Father, and at the same time and in the same manner they declare the unity of the Christian and the Christ. The believer escapes the internal dualism of seeking to be both Christian and worldling by being unified in himself and unified with God from the center of his being and throughout the various forms of personal activity.

With this understanding of Christ's relation to God and the Christian's relation to Christ, the Christian can appreciate the encouraging statement, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Christ answers prayer just as God answers it, bringing satisfaction to the suppliant and glory to the Father. The revelation of God in Christ is complete and yet continuous. The divine appeal to the human heart never ceases, for living men always need direct manifestations of the living God as the starting point and the continual stimulus of their higher life.

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The believer approaches Christ in prayer with confidence and success. He discovers that love becomes a possible bond of union and the only real inspiration of obedience, "If ye love Me ye will keep My commandments." Love recognizes Christ as its superior. Love cannot disobey Him. The believer who attains to the obedience of love is thus prepared to welcome the Comforter, Who comes in answer to Christ's prayer to the Father. The love that obeys Christ leads on, step by step, to the final revelation of God in the Holy Spirit. He comes to the individual believer as an abiding presence, an indwelling, consoling presence, as the Spirit of truth, so welcome to the honest, earnest mind, and so impossible to the world, which fails to cultivate the power to receive Him or even perceive His presence. Believers know Him because He abides with them and lives in them as an essential factor in their spiritual life.

Jesus assures His disciples that His own personal relation to them shall continue even after His visible presence is withdrawn. That relation will never be renounced by Him or silently disowned. "I will not leave you orphans; I come unto you." When His visible presence is withdrawn from the world, His disciples still behold Him and still live, not as a mere parallel of existence, but as an effect of causal connection. "Because I live ye shall live also." Their life is still dependent on His and their personal relation to Him remains unbroken and unimpaired.

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There comes a day when His disciples will have a clearer knowledge of their relation to Christ, and through Him to God, the Father. They will know that Christ is in the Father, that Christians are in Christ, and that Christ is in Christians, three forms of indwelling no one of which can be lost without breaking this wonderful circle of life and this beautiful bond of being. Personal experience alone can admit men to the meaning of these three relations which are mutually explanatory and which show how men are drawn close to God by internal and spiritual ties that are not subject to temporal influence. These three relations belong to the spiritual life and lie at the very basis of personal religion as taught by Jesus.

The man who demonstrates his love for Christ by the personal possession of His commandments and by keeping them, becomes the object of the Father's love as well as the love of Christ, Who, in love, will manifest Himself to him. Divine love makes itself known to the responsive heart and leaves its own imprint upon the soul, as the sun paints in silence every opening flower, each verdured valley, and each wooded hill. The obedient Christian receives personal manifestations of the Christ, for love is an expression of personality on both sides and must always have a person as its object. The divine life of men moves on the personal plane, and cannot be interpreted intelligently on any lower level. Below the plane of personal experience there can be no knowing subject or conscious object, and hence the supreme, religious relation ceases to exist. Per-

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sonality of the Christian type is self-conscious and self-determining in the highest degree as it realizes itself in the kingdom of God.

The question asked by Jude, who is here distinguished from the traitor, reveals the fact that one apostle, at least, believes that Jesus has made a palpable change of front. "What is come to pass that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us and not unto the world?" With Jude, the kingdom of God is an earthly kingdom, while with Jesus it is heavenly, spiritual, divine. Men are always slow to cross the line which separates the two, even under the leadership of our Lord. With Jesus, there is only one question here, namely, the question of receptivity. Love to God invites Him to come in answer to it, while disobedience or lack of love closes the path God Himself must pursue in entering the human heart. Hence, the divine life of men is possible only when men make it possible by their own response to the divine appeal. The rejection of the word of Jesus is the rejection of the Father's word also, and there remains no other manifestation of God for men who have already rejected Him.

One more truth completes our Lord's doctrine of the interior life of the believer. "The Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you." They are not to fail through forgetfulness of Christ's teaching nor for lack of further instruction. The conditions of success must all be met. The Holy Spirit is sent by the Father, Who sent the

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Son; He will teach the same truth that Christ has taught; He will have for the people of God a personal presence and a personal work to do; He can be known by them and welcomed as a Person; for the divine life of men must not sink below the personal level when Jesus departs from the world, but rather rise into clearer consciousness and move more freely in the unhindered fellowship and under the constant direction of the Holy Spirit.

The relation of Jesus to His disciples after His final departure from earth, remains constant as regards His personal interest and His efficient aid. The Holy Spirit comes in His Name and as His representative, as well as the representative of the Father. And now He leaves His peace with His disciples as their heritage and gives His peace unto them as their permanent possession. Worldly possessions slip from men's grasp slowly perhaps or even suddenly, but His peace abides in the hearts of His disciples as long as they are true to Him. It is a perpetual possession, banishing fear and trouble, those two internal enemies of the spiritual life. His immediate as well as His final departure rightly understood becomes a cause for rejoicing on the part of His friends, because He goes to the Father, Who is greater than Himself, and thus He becomes the one Mediator of the grace of God to His disciples and to all mankind.

Jesus anticipates history in order to aid their faith. He states His reason for not speaking much with His disciples, not because their friendship has suffered a sudden chill, not because of their failure

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to respond to Him as they should, not because of unexpected acts on the part of His enemies, but simply because "the prince of the world cometh" in order to assert his power over Christ, in Whom he discovers nothing in common with himself. Evil must have its opportunity to manifest itself as well as good, unless indeed it chooses to renounce itself and thus changes its very nature by faith in Christ. Neutrality in morals and religion is evidently unattainable. Hence the Christ pursues His chosen path, beset as it is by evil men and by Satan himself in order that the world may know from the side of evil as well as its opposite that He loves the Father and renders to Him the perfect obedience of love.

Personal religion as taught by Jesus, or the divine life of men within the radius of personal experience, may be summed up in the personal relation of Christ to the Christian on the one side and the personal relation of the Christian to the Christ on the other, a twofold relation that insures the Christian's present peace of mind as well as his future place of peace and happiness, his present nearness to God and knowledge of God, his free access to God by prayer, his personal preparation to welcome the Holy Spirit, his desire to be the worthy object of the Father's love as well as the love of Christ, his capacity for the instruction of the Holy Spirit, Who re-preaches and re-enforces the teachings of Jesus, his disposition to receive Christ's peace instead of any worldly substitute, his faith in Christ as the successful opponent of evil and the supreme manifesta-



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tion of God to man. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are shown in active co-operation with the believer in the process of constituting and also interpreting his life. The highest Personality touches the lower and lifts it into a consciousness of divine things by bestowing upon it a divine life. Thus, and thus only, can men obtain and then maintain true conceptions of the real aims and ends of existence. The spiritual life of men cannot drop to a lower level. It is essentially personal. The Jew traced his relationship to God through Moses and the law on the one hand, and through Abraham and physical birth on the other, while the Christian traces his relationship to God, the Father, through Christ and the Holy Spirit. The former relationship becomes attenuated and unreal, while the latter is non-existent if it is not direct and personal.

As we continue to meditate upon the teaching of Jesus in this favorite chapter, we are constrained to say, "Never man spake like this man," for the simple reason that we are constrained to believe that no man ever thought like this man. His words fairly reflect His thought and His life. They never struggle for effect, but without effort shine like "the inviolable stars." His philosophy finds expression in clear conceptions, practical principles, and profound spiritual truths formulated in the most comprehensible terms and organized with logical consistency. He answers all inquiries in order to satisfy human reason and direct the human will. His theory of life and being embraces the Center and Source of all being and all life, and exhibits

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the relation of God to man and man to God by means of the life and personality of one great Mediator. If the Master appears to us to be a mystic as He discourses on the divine life of men as an inner, personal experience and a present reality, let us cheerfully confess that He is still the Master. Let us own with profound conviction that His is the only mind that can explore the mystic realm of the heart life, completely clarify human thought, reveal the lines of normal development for the individual, harmonize intellect, conscience, and will, and in short, lay the foundation for an interior life that is worthy of man as its agent and of God as its original author, its only redeemer, and its ceaseless associate. The conclusion is irresistibly borne in upon us that personal religion as taught by Jesus in this great chapter rings true to man as morally responsible and to God as the eternal Father.

## CHAPTER XX.

### SOCIAL SERVICE SUSTAINED BY DIVINE AGENCY.

Personal religion, as taught by Jesus, finds its appropriate field of activity in the personal service which He has thus inspired and then commanded. However worthy the disciple may be in himself, he does not exist for himself alone, but also for others and in the same sense that he exists for himself. Like Christ, he seeks to interest, inspire, and uplift men, and not to subjugate or exploit them. With friendly interest and personal appeal he points them to the same great Source of life which he has found, and offers to bestow upon them the best his life contains. He is not intent on gathering about him adherents and supporters, but seeks to establish that relation of the soul to Christ which is the basis of the noblest manhood, and thus to hasten the coming of the kingdom of God. He lives his true life, his best, his complete life, only when he acts on the principle that he is a part of one great whole. He sees himself among believers as one of them, and even among men of the world as one chosen out of the world and yet bearing a message to the world. His spiritual life described in the fourteenth chapter of the Gospel of John prepares him for the social service inspired and sustained by divine Agency, which we find so fully set forth in the fifteenth chapter.

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Disciples are described in this chapter as fruitful branches, chosen friends, and willing witnesses. Their relation to Christ foreshadows their relation to men, and the former governs the latter in all the forms it may rightfully assume. Their individuality becomes the basis of their ministry. Branches they are, individually dependent on the Vine, but never fruitless branches, existing for themselves alone; friends they are with the standing of friends, and not servants who know not the Master's mind; witnesses also are they, witnesses of Christ, and hence they are not men of the world, but men of the kingdom of God, representatives of the new order of life and being. As they are inspired, so also are they sustained by Christ, by the Holy Spirit, and by the Father, so that their social activity in no way lessens or lowers their personal religion, but constantly strengthens and perfects it by its proper exercise and its appropriate expression. The true Christian mystic ought, therefore, to be the true Christian minister, because he keeps in vital relation with the sources of spiritual life. On the other hand, there should be a perceptible deepening of spiritual life, evidencing a closer relation to the supreme Source of spiritual life and power on the part of every active, earnest servant of God.

Jesus presents the religious life of the Christian as it appears to Him in one rounded whole. In the fourteenth chapter He has described the interior life of the believer, and in the fifteenth He exhibits his exterior life, if we may use the expression. Here we see the disciple among men as the repre-

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sentative of Christ, first seeking to save and serve them, and, second, patiently enduring persecution at their hands even as the Master did. The outer life of the Christian springs from his inner life as naturally and effectively as the branch produces the blossom and the fruit. The disciple is a living, growing, fruitful branch of the true Vine, Whose life he freely shares and Whose support he continually requires; a sincere friend of the divine Christ, Whose mind and heart are open to give to him and to receive from him; a willing witness to the truth of Christ's claims where those claims are yet unknown or where they are still rejected. As the representative of Christ, he will be hated and hindered by men who cling to their own system of thought and life, but he will be aided by the Spirit of truth, Who always has a mission and a ministry among men and Who continues His benevolent activity until His work is done.

The religious life of the disciple, who is the living representative of Christ among men, springs from Christ as its source, claims friendship with Christ according to His appointment, and enters into companionship with the Comforter according to His promise. The enemies of Christ are the enemies of the Christian life, and its future, near and distant, remains securely in Christ's keeping. In short, the Christian's relation to Christ governs his conduct and service at every point just as it controls the inner motions of his mind.

Disciples are taught in this fifteenth chapter to regard Jesus Christ as the true vine, themselves

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as the branches, and the Father as the husbandman, Whose personal care reaches the individual branch, according to its need. As branches, they are taken right into this living relation with Christ and with the Father. Surely they should be keenly conscious of it; they should accept it knowingly and sincerely; they should work it out in a manner that shows faithfulness and intelligence. This relation, so essential to fruitage and even to Christian life itself, may be dissolved, its continuance being conditioned on the fruitfulness of the branches. Unfruitful branches lose their connection with Christ by their own and by the husbandman's act, and thus miss the end of their existence, while fruitful branches are cleansed by divine agency in order that they may become yet more fruitful. According to the conception of Christ, the Christian must be an active agent among men, producing effects that are Christian, that demonstrate discipleship, and that glorify God in His highest manifestation to mankind.

"He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for apart from Me ye can do nothing." Branches become fruitful simply by abiding in Christ and by Christ abiding in them. As the Vine, He vitalizes them and gives them a single nature. They are made clean by His word, so that they are one thing and not two or twenty, mixed in confusion or even in conflict. They are really Christian, and Christian through and through, and find to their own satisfaction that their relation to Christ fills out their life to the point of fruitfulness, the point of perfection. The negative state-

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ment completes His thought and leaves nothing in doubt or dispute, "the branch cannot bear fruit of itself," "apart from Me ye can do nothing." Evil combines with evil to produce its results. Shall good be thus attained and in like manner issue from a finite source? Must not the man who would serve his fellowman, reverently yet really, link arms with God? Is not this the teaching of Jesus, Who knows how to come close to men without losing hold of God? The Christian must learn Christ's secret, and never part company with Him through his anxious efforts to seek and to save the lost. Perhaps there are Christian men, and even Christian ministers, in our own age, who have placed the emphasis on the wrong relation. Perhaps there are religious teachers to-day who need Christ's correction in view of this very error. The branch extends from the vine to receive the ministration of air and sunshine and rain, but if it fails to abide in the Vine it is withered, gathered by men, cast into the fire and burned as the inevitable outcome of useless existence. No man, unaided, is equal to the task of redeeming a single soul. The life he seeks to save overpowers him and his judgment follows quickly in the footsteps of his failure. The professing Christian who lacks the divine life and the support of divine agency, falls an easy prey to worldly men because he lacks the protection of God, where that protection is most required.

The disciple finds in his personal relation to Christ the ample basis for prayer as the expression of every desire that harmonizes with the divine

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methods and ends. The Christian who fails to pray and receive answer to prayer, belies his profession and misrepresents his Savior. Fruitfulness on the part of disciples honors the Father as the supreme source of life and distinguishes them as the disciples of Christ. As disciples they are saved in order to their own well-being and also in preparation for active service in some field of Christian ministry. They are saved both to be and to do, and in both alike to glorify God, Who saved them, and any misapprehension of the purpose of God must rob their own purpose of meaning and reality.

Christians maintain their right relation to Christ by keeping His commandments, just as He maintains His relation to the Father in the same way. "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." This law of right life in the spiritual realm appears to be universal in its application, resembling, in this respect, the law of gravity in the material universe. Hence we naturally infer that the higher life of men must be the same in its nature as the perfect human life of Christ. Men become partakers of the divine nature as a divine provision and a human privilege. The Christ and the Christian, each according to his own measure of being, lives a life of obedience, a life of love, a life of personal devotion to God. In both, love is that supreme personal relation that binds God to man and man to God. The power of love is not exhausted by engaging itself to a superior Being, but only strengthened and re-enforced for



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its task of holding all Christian men in the bonds of brotherhood. The ministry of love proceeds in the temple of God and among Christian people, from Christian to Christian, a circulation of life which is as real and as important as the circulation of the vital fluid in the body. There is a joy in the heart of Jesus which He calls His own, and which He desires to see in His disciples, because He enables them to realize their highest hopes, so that they have a joy that appears to be all their own. His life fills out their life and enables them to be their best as His disciples and to do their best as His representatives in the Church and in the world.

No difference of opinion and no doubtful disputation is permitted to spring up concerning Christ's commandment, which He states in the simplest terms. "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you." He enjoins disciples to love each other as the prime condition of obedience and the first step in discipleship, and the standard of love He enjoins is set by Himself. Men must learn to measure themselves by Him and not by each other. They must learn to minister to each other as Christians because the love of Christ must not stop in any one soul, but move freely to others without change of kind or reduction of quality. His love abides unchanged and unexcelled, and so fixes unchangeably the standard of Christian love.

And now He is able to declare what His disciples are better able to understand. "Ye are my friends if ye do the things which I command you." Obedience becomes the basis of a real personal associ-

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ation. The very thing that might be supposed to subjugate them is the thing that liberates them. Men obey other men with the result that they are bound by that obedience, but they obey God with the assurance that they are being liberated by it. It is by obedience to Christ that men rise to His level of life as acquaintances, associates, and trusted companions in life and service. They enjoy the privilege of conversing and counseling with Him. They know His teaching and even His mind and heart, and can, therefore, enter into His plans and purposes. They are no longer servants in His estimation, and should not be in their own. They should show personal devotion to Him and intelligent initiative in His service. His kindness and His candor make their continual appeal to His disciples and keep them open to that perfect Personality Whose sovereign grace it is to claim His obedient servants as His cherished friends.

With His intelligence and good will, with His knowledge of them and love for them, Jesus chose His disciples, nor did they first choose Him or even subsequently choose Him with equal strength of purpose or definiteness of knowledge. As He places Himself close to them, His superior personality plainly appears. He evidently rises above them when His will claims them by definite choice, a fact that always characterizes His relation to them. Their response to Him falls far below the action of His will in its strength and constancy, a fact which necessarily conditions this divine friendship. They should vindicate His choice of them as disciples in

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three ways: They should be active as disciples; they should bear fruit that will remain; they should constantly receive from God by prayer. Their life as His chosen friends, must be social as well as individual, its very worth enlarging its field of action.

Love is shown to be the principle of the Christian's social life, as it is the principle of his individual life. Of course, the world has its society and loves its own on the basis of its own being and according to the principles of its own activity. It necessarily hates what is its opposite, not only its contrast, but also its contradiction. Hence, Christians must expect to share with Christ this hatred which knows neither rest nor respite. The choice of Jesus has changed His followers from one realm of being and life to a totally different one, in which Christian love forever reigns. As the world hated Christ, so it will hate the Christian just as long as it is the world, and as long as the Christian is the true follower of Christ. They are irreconcilables in everyday life as well as in abstract doctrinal discussions. The disciples of Christ are not of the world in spirit or aim or practice, because Christ has taken them out of the world by the transforming power of His own choice. They must, therefore, expect the very same treatment from the world that He received, and for the very same reason. His coming and His teaching become the occasion of sin on the part of men who rejected His teaching and Himself. They hate Him, and in doing so they hated the Father also, an act and an attitude of mind which leads to a personal and absolute re-

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jection of God. Yet their hatred of God is unconcealed and without excuse. It appears in the light of that age irrational, self-centered, sinful. In the face of evidence such as had no parallel in history, they maintained their attitude of opposition, and thus fulfilled the Scripture statement, "They hated Me without a cause."

The opposers of Jesus stand in personal opposition to Him as His disciples occupy the place of personal devotion to Him. All men are brought to the same standard of life, the acceptance or rejection of Christ; the same principle of action, the love of Christ or the reverse; the same principle of classification, the society of believers commonly called the Church, or the society of disbelievers commonly called the world. Thus we behold Jesus at the very center of our social life, giving to it its true interpretation and showing conclusively that men who learn life from Him differ radically from men who learn it elsewhere.

We do not expect Jesus to precipitate a conflict within and without and then leave His disciples to fight the double battle alone. As He offers His aid in the interior life, so also He provides His help for the exterior life. The coming Comforter will be their constant assistant in this continuous conflict. "When the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the spirit of truth, Who proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of Me: and ye also bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning." Their testimony has its basis in their own personal knowl-

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edge, but it will be divinely supported and supplemented. There will still be an active Divine Agent in their midst and in close personal association with them. The departure of Jesus means the coming of this One Whom Jesus sends, and Who proceeds from the Father with full power and authority. He comes as the Spirit of truth, for truth is essential in the social order as well as in individual life. He shall bear witness of Christ, while the disciples witness in concert with Him. Their testimony will coincide with that of the Holy Spirit, a guiding principle and a reassuring fact they should never forget and never fail to realize.

We must not expect our Lord to anticipate modern methods in social betterment, with the various departments of work and the corresponding division of labor, but we can see that He lays down the principle on which all social advancement must be made, and He plainly designates the one great Agent Who presides over all real progress in religious service and Who inspires all real religious efficiency. Christian missions, evangelism, and education require His presence and His supremacy. Even those institutions that aim to ameliorate the physical conditions of men, the hospital, the orphanage, and the social settlement, fail to attain their full measure of usefulness without the presiding presence of the Holy Spirit. No organized body of Christian workers can safely sever their relation to Christ or set aside the principle He has supplied. Even Christian civilization is not an independent thing that can endure apart from Christ, but, as

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history has often proved, begins to wither and die when severed from its Source.

Thus the divine sustains the human at every point in Christian ministry. Christ is always theistic and never deistic in His teaching. The divine life of men issues in Christian ministry as opportunity offers, and in the rejection of evil and error as occasion demands. The disciples of Jesus are not social ciphers, not isolated individuals, but persons in the Christian sense, living and laboring among men for their moral and spiritual betterment. They are active agents, intelligent and constructive. Christian personality necessarily has its social as well as its individual development. It has its principles of social action as here stated, and its social ideals as here defined, both of which are Christian contributions to human knowledge and life, and plainly attest their origin by their effects. The religious life of men must be fruitful in order to attain its complete development and in order to perpetuate its own existence among men by bestowing upon them its own essential worth. Love moves the Christian even as it moves the Christ, yet the Christian must ever remember that "a servant is not greater than his lord." The uplifting friendship of Christ and the sanctifying fellowship of the Holy Spirit will not save him from persecution, but will win for him a sincere welcome wherever Christ Himself has been received. The divine life of the Christian is thus demonstrated to be really divine in its relation to God, and in its separation from the world; in its devotion to Christ and in its ministry

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to men; in its individual quality and in its social activity; in short, in all that constitutes Christian personality, a worthy response to the divine appeal through Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Such is the social ministry of the disciple of Jesus, as set forth in the fifteenth chapter of John's Gospel, a ministry instituted, inspired, and sustained by God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Whom His redeemed rejoice to know as God, absolute, revealed, and ever present. Deity in the trinitarian sense supports the man who ministers to men as the representative of Christ. Such is the teaching of our Lord as He displays the operation of the agencies appointed for social betterment. As the divine element enters individual life, so must it enter the social life in order to its redemption, and God alone as Jesus Christ reveals Him to men, is a cause equal to such an effect. Trinitarian teaching has triumphantly won its way in social service and has easily outstripped all other systems of doctrine which inculcate a lower conception of God.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP FOR THE INDIVIDUAL AND FOR SOCIETY.

Having described the disciple in terms of personal life and religion, and having portrayed him in his social life and relations, especially in the midst of his own kind, Jesus next completes his description by presenting the disciple in his relation to an opposing world. The opposition of the world will issue in an open conflict which evidently aims at the subjugation or even the destruction of the disciple. "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service to God." The world has its standard of sin as well as the Church, however contradictory that standard may be, inconsistent with the ten commandments, or at variance with conscience, and we must expect the world to use its power to enforce its idea.

It becomes increasingly apparent that Jesus is never disappointing to earnest minds. Whichever way He faces, He seems the same. He looks into the individual heart and life with perfect knowledge of their contents, and so also He looks into the unwritten history of the future with its conflicting agencies and its diversified interests. He estimates the outcome not only by means of the principles that must govern action, but also by an immediate knowledge which is more than prophetic. He sees



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what the future holds in store for His disciples, and provides a spiritual Leadership that will meet every emergency.

The development of the divine life of men proceeds in spite of the opposition of enemies. That opposition accentuates the need of spiritual leadership and also the reality of personal religion. It will be met by the effective assistance of the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, Who continues the teaching and the leadership of Christ. As Augustine has said, "When Christ came forth from the Father, He so came into the world as never to leave the Father; and He so left the world and went unto the Father as never to leave the world." The Father and the Son never abandon the scene, but work in and through the Spirit for the establishment of the kingdom of God. If the disciples find enemies and opposers in the synagogues and among the professed worshipers of God, they also discover a sympathetic Associate, Who is ever near and a mighty Helper, Who convicts the world of sin, and Who guides the followers of Jesus into all truth.

The evil treatment disciples must expect from men has its adequate explanation and its sufficient cause in the religious ignorance of their persecutors, who, as Jesus declares, "have not known the Father nor Me." They are differently centered. Their theory of religion excludes Christ. Hence they cannot be expected to be passive in presence of Christian men. They are active in their opposition, and in kindness Jesus forewarns His disciples, Who

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could not anticipate it or measure the bitterness that would expel them from the synagogues and even compass their death as a service rendered to God. History must be rewritten at cost of His life and theirs. He states the fact and the cause of persecution, that when it comes to pass they may have the explanation at hand. He told them no sooner because He was with them and was willing to carry for them the burden of this unwelcome knowledge as long as He could.

His return to the Father, Who sent Him into the world, calls forth no inquiry or even comment from any one of His disciples. They are evidently not looking into His life, nor are they estimating the meaning of His return to God. Their minds are limited by an earthly horizon. Spiritual vision and spiritual knowledge must be dim and contracted, if not almost lacking. Their sorrow has quite overcome them. Their eyes have a fixed gaze. They are looking at their future as though Christ were lost to it and that soon they would be deprived of His leadership. Such is not the proper attitude of mind nor the real outlook before them, as He plainly proves in the remaining part of the chapter.

If His departure brings soul-sorrow to His disciples, it brings also soul-joy, because it brings the Comforter, Who convicts the world of sin, Who guides disciples into all truth, Who declares to them the things to come, Who glorifies Christ. The good agencies are active as well as the evil after Christ's departure. Evil has its place and acts its part, and good seizes its opportunity and exercises its influ-

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ence. Surely they can now accept the departure of Jesus as being expedient for them in view of the spiritual results that flow therefrom. Nothing at all is lost and very much is gained. Christ is not lost to them, and they still have a divine Leader and a divine Associate, real though spiritual in presence and power, and without Whom spiritual life would be impossible under any conditions. A divine Presence will attend them, Who is not subject to death, like Jesus, nor limited by bodily form, but Who abides with them in their social and individual life with an unhindered and an uninterrupted fellowship. He enters the great work of human redemption which Jesus has undertaken, and His work follows that of the Christ in a threefold ministry: He serves the world by convicting it of sin; He serves the Christian by affording him spiritual leadership; He serves Jesus Christ as the head of the race and the representative of God by republishing His doctrine wherever it is required and by interpreting His life wherever it has found welcome. In His perpetual ministry He glorifies Christ, in Whom men are enabled to see the unity of the divine plan and purpose, which unfolds in wisdom and love, ever revealing broader lines of development and deeper significance of salvation.

The teaching of Jesus never narrows down into ordinary human limits, nor does His leadership ever end in a blind alley. Both widen in prospect and deepen in purpose, and thus demand all there is in man to comprehend them, all his intellect, and all his affection, and all his will, all there is of each

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man, and all there is of all combined. Wherever any man falls short in his acceptance of Christ, he will ask questions such as the disciples asked. "What is this that He saith unto us, A little while and ye behold Me not; and again a little while, and ye shall see Me: and, Because I go to the Father?" The explanation is contained in what He had already taught them, but not in what they had already learned. His death will, indeed, take Him from His disciples for a little while, but the time lost to them here will be spent there in the presence of the Father as their Savior and their Intercessor. His resurrection will bring Him back to them with the assurance that His sacrifice for sin avails with God. This is and has been His teaching from the very first, the teaching which He now illustrates in this unmistakable way. Their sorrow has its cause, namely, His death and departure, but they shall have joy also which has its cause, namely, His return to them. The travailing woman becomes the joyful mother. She rejoices in a new relation of life the very moment she rejoices over a new life. She has enriched herself and others in duty and devotion, in sacrifice and service. So, also, these first disciples shall rejoice in the very results and outcome of their sorrow. They shall realize a new spiritual life and relationship which are full of joy, a joy that no one can take away from them. And in that day, so different from this, "ye shall ask Me no question," because you will know, and because you will have learned to interpret. Then you will pray to the Father and receive from Him in the

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name of Christ. Your relation to God will then be immediate and personal, being continually demonstrated in your thought and experience. Prayer is more than intelligent inquiry, more than earnest desire, more than sincere purpose. It is man in the totality of his being making his appeal to God, as God, intelligent, merciful, and mighty, as related to man and interested in him according to the measure of deity. Such human appeal brings its appropriate divine response, by which human need is satisfied and the spirit is filled to its completion. His whole being becomes vital with divine life. Co-operation with God is neither impossible nor unreal. His joy is full, for his life is filled with the best life and all of life it can contain.

Jesus has spoken to His disciples in what appears to them dark sayings, because they have not yet touched the center or grasped the outlines of His teaching, but He foretells a well-marked hour when He shall speak to them in plain terms, revealing the Father and their relation to Him, a relation they can know and appreciate, a relation which they should esteem supreme, illuminating and explaining all others. Even the prayer of Jesus will not be required to insure the answer to their prayer which springs from this existing relation, "for the Father Himself loveth you because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father." The Father's love becomes the basis for their prayer on the divine side and their faith in Christ on the human side. They have believed that He came out from the Father, that He entered the

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world and human history, that He returns to the Father, three specific articles of their future faith.

The disciples at once assure Him that His speech seems plain to them now and that their faith in Him is firmly established, but their glowing report of their mental state cannot be accepted by the Master. Strange as it may seem, their faith will fail once more, at least temporarily. Their knowledge of themselves is still sadly defective and needs continual correction. "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is come that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me;" scattered to their own as though their life centered there; scattered from Him as though no ties existed, no invisible bonds of faith and hope and love bound them to Him; scattered from each other only to be brought together again by a spiritual leadership that will unite them and guide them and govern them henceforth. Now they are scattered and He is left alone so far as human aid and human association is concerned. He must tread the wine-press alone and demonstrate once more His racial relation to men and his personal relation to the Father. God alone can abide with Him, and He alone of all men can abide with God in perfect love and obedience. Evil agencies in combination cannot destroy the relations of His life or dissolve the union of His deity and His humanity. Alone in conflict with evil, alone, as man's representative head, alone, save for the presence of the Father, alone, yet one with God and man. No confusion of ideas troubles us here and

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no fear that we may be the victims of cunningly devised fables. Surely no man, however willing and capable, could ever anticipate the teaching of Jesus or easily follow His thought. He thinks for a race as well as an individual, and hence His conceptions transcend His disciples' present power of apprehension. But they will know, they will understand, they will appreciate His wonderful words and His mighty deeds.

Closer still comes the personal assurance, "in Me ye shall have peace," even as it has been so it will be, and the adverse fact, unwelcome but not to be unknown, "in the world ye shall have tribulation," then those last reassuring words, instinct with comfort and courage, "be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." The massing of evil against Christ issues in its own defeat, for Christ has already conquered. Who can question His victory? Who can doubt this one fact, at least, which comes within the scope of human knowledge and human experience, that Christ has overcome the world? Its aims and ideals and activities have not delighted or deluded Him, but in the very presence of them all He has demonstrated His devotion to the divine image in man and the divine plan for human life. In Himself He consecrates human personality as divine in its first creation, in its free choices, and in its supreme relations.

Thus Jesus unfolds to His disciple and all men His thought of the divine life of men in its proper development under the leadership of the Spirit. His doctrine, His service, and His human person-

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ality reveal the rich contents and the splendid lines of spiritual manhood. Concealed and avowed enemies of this life will always be found among men, and even men who are formally religious will manifest active opposition, but there will always be a divine Helper Who makes it possible for the disciple to live among men as Jesus directs, and especially within the sacred precincts of the soul itself. The presence of the Holy Spirit should be welcomed by the disciples as the next movement in the divine order of revelation and redemption, taking the place of the visible presence of Christ and offering God's final answer to this universal need of men. If men are sinners, He convicts them of sin; if they are saved, He comforts and sustains them in obedience. Like Christ, He is related to all souls, for like Christ, He is God. He glorifies Christ, His humanity and His deity, by showing both to men in their essential worth and their relative value. Christ is God manifested to men in human personality and life. The Holy Spirit is God manifested to men in invisible and spiritual presence. His divine agency and divine character are as real to men as their answering natures can conceive. He is real to a sinner by condemnation of his sin, and He is real to a saint by sustaining him in his obedience to God.

According to a recent statement of Arthur S. Hoyt, "Protestantism means trust in a living Spirit to interpret the facts of historic Christianity and the growing life of the race. It means a religion of the Spirit, and not a religion of merely outward au-



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thority." As thus defined, the meaning of Protestantism completely coincides with the teaching of the fourth Gospel, a splendid reproduction of the Master's mind in the conception of great religious leaders and in the course of human history. Protestantism presents the sublime spectacle of humanity welcoming anew the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and by the Holy Spirit. Great leaders arise and shine, and even great multitudes are illuminated with the radiance of spiritual light, as personal religion had shone with isolated and subdued brightness in the middle age.

Personal religion and the corresponding social service exist in every age, a sufficient evidence of the presence of the Spirit, yet both are likely to be limited by the prevailing ideas and influences of age and nation. Perfect spiritual freedom has seldom been declared. The divine character of religious life and its divine development have seldom been realized. Strange to say, Jesus is not the only teacher even Christian men are accustomed to recognize, nor is the Holy Spirit the only spiritual leader. The first commandment, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, mind, and strength, is not couched in rhetorical language, but rather in the accurate, scientific terms adapted to the careful statement of an essential truth of the law and the gospel, an unbroken strand that runs through revelation from end to end and a plain principle that underlies all mental action. The partial acceptance of Christ has not the same effect as the complete and perfect acceptance of Him as

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the Son of God and the Savior of the world. The complete acceptance of Christ prepares the soul to accept the Holy Spirit as the soul of our soul, changes the very atmosphere we breathe, the earth we tread, the heaven we seek, because it changes the life we live, making the human life truly divine, divine in its joys and hope, its faith and life, its aims and ideals, its companionships and its ministries, its law and its leadership.

In recent years the Christian Church has felt the devitalizing influence of modern materialism and the attendant worldliness which has crept in with stealthy step. It is easier to rob the Church of its power than to resist it successfully. It is easier to revamp the old doctrines and offer them as the last expression of "advanced thought" than to disprove those doctrines or even to obey them. It is easier to use the language of orthodoxy with a different meaning than to combat the sturdy truth that has commanded the minds of men for centuries. Materialism, like every other form of skepticism is retrogressive and reactionary. It is the contradiction of Christianity and seeks to eliminate the very essence of Christianity as a spiritual religion. What a corrective for such tendencies do we find in the fourth Gospel! What a splendid refutation of the very basis on which they are built!

The world has no conflict with the worldly Church, for the worldly Church cannot convince it of sin and righteousness and judgment to come. The worldly Church does not possess the power of the Spirit nor does it enjoy the leadership of the

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Spirit. It must rest back upon divine providence which shapes our ends, rough hew them as we will. It must be content to represent Christianity as one of the religions of the world and not undertake to demonstrate that it is the one supreme religion, separate from all others in its divine character and power, and finally answering every need of the human spirit, here and hereafter.

Do we properly appreciate the spiritual leadership which Jesus provided and so freely offers to the individual and the Church, a leadership which He cultivates in His own life and continues by sending the Holy Spirit, a leadership that is safe and sane, that lifts and liberates, that always bears the stamp of deity upon it? Shall our practical deism cheat us out of our essential Christianity as soon as Christ takes His departure? Shall not the divine life of men continue to be divine by continual accessions of the divine and continual cooperation with God? If, indeed, Jesus Christ is the Son of God, we must expect Him to lift men up into the spiritual life He describes, enabling them to realize it in its inner content and in its outer relations, in its internal and external activities, in its influence and development under the direction of the Holy Spirit, and do all this in spite of the interference and opposition of evil. His leadership must be trustworthy in presence of enemies and in prospect of the future, seen and unseen. His eye easily surveys human life from center to circumference; His mind comprehends the mind of man and the mind of God; His heart overflows with

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divine love as it bestows its divine life upon men and teaches them its own divine art. Jesus is man beside us, but He is also God above us. God is a Spirit, and so also is Jesus Christ, Who wins men to spiritual life and prepares them to respond to spiritual leadership.

Perhaps there are individual Christians or even whole companies of them, who, like these first disciples, are filled with sorrow by the departure of Christ, the only Christ they ever knew. The historic Christ is gone as He said He would go, but the spiritual Christ has not come to them as He promised to do. They linger about the manger and the cross and the empty tomb, and scarcely hear the angel say, He is not here. They discredit the spirituality of Christ and in so doing discredit the spirituality of the Christian. They know of the Holy Spirit, but they do not know Him as their spiritual Leader. They have not grasped the full significance of the well-known hymn,

"I worship Thee, O Holy Ghost,  
I love to worship Thee.  
My risen Lord for aye were lost  
But for Thy company."

As Christian, how dare we limit the divine life within us? How dare we accept Jesus as our Savior and also as our Lord, and then refuse to receive the Holy Spirit as our Leader in individual life and social service? Only as spiritual beings can we belong to the kingdom of God. Flesh and

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blood, with all its pomp and circumstance, cannot enter there. Perhaps there is still a scattering of disciples, every man to his own, and perhaps there must be until disciples are united by those bonds that are spiritual, that life that is eternal, that leadership that cannot be overcome by evil or dissolved by death.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE PRAYER OF JESUS, OR THE UNOBSTRUCTED APPROACH TO GOD.

The prayer of Jesus, which John alone records, and which comprises the seventeenth chapter of his Gospel, leads us into the higher realm of spiritual life, where the light of the divine Presence envelops without overpowering us. As we have learned to enter into the thought and share the life of our Lord, we have been prepared to follow Him to this mountain-top of religious experience which lies within the confines of His kingdom. We have been moving upward toward John's second climax, his crowning statement with reference to spiritual life and leadership. We are approaching his third climax, which embraces the essential elements of the other two. The first we find in the twelfth chapter, where Jesus is publicly recognized as man's Messiah; the second, in the seventeenth chapter, where Jesus appears as man's spiritual leader, praying to the Father; the third, in the twentieth chapter, where the crucified Christ rises from the dead as the last public demonstration of His deity, the completion of His redemptive work, and the new beginning of His spiritual kingdom. Supreme movements are these, when a sinful world is permitted to see the King of Israel, the interceding Savior, the rising Redeemer, all united in this one wonderful Person so evidently and so intimately

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related to God and man, and when that world is even permitted to accompany Him in His prayer, as He anticipates as well as reviews His life and labor.

This seventeenth chapter impresses us as a single utterance on a single theme, "glorify thy Son that thy Son may glorify Thee." This impression is reflected in the printing of our Bibles. This chapter is divided into verses for convenience of reference, but even the Revised Version has not grouped the verses in paragraphs according to the different phases of thought. The theme does not readily dissolve into its separate parts, yet there are phases of subject matter and contrasts of thought, if not distinct lines of cleavage, which mark them off from each other. The unity impresses the reader rather than the diversity. His attention is naturally fixed on this wonderful Man, the only Person Who could offer such a prayer, Who could press into the divine presence absolutely unhindered in His approach to God. Nothing in His own nature or conduct or life clouds His unsullied spirit or limits His sense of God. The divine thought and will find perfect answer in Him, and the very disposition of Deity seems to be revealed to men. As Jesus approaches God, the Father, in this prayer formulated by a human mind, divinely aided and illuminated and uttered by human lips, we note with gratitude how close the Father comes to Him while He is yet on earth, while He continues among men, while He still abides in His humanity.

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The seventeenth chapter has been characterized as "the simplest in language, the profoundest in meaning, in the whole Bible." We read it and re-read it, and seem to see six phases of thought, more or less distinctly defined. In verses one to five, Jesus prays that the Father may glorify Him as the head of the human race and the second Person of the holy Trinity. In verses six to ten, He declares that He has manifested the name of the Father to chosen men. In the eleventh to the thirteenth, He regards His disciples from the viewpoint of His Father's presence. In the fourteenth to the nineteenth, He shows how He has given the word of God to His disciples for their sanctification. In the twentieth to the twenty-third, He prays for the unity of believers. In the twenty-fourth to the twenty-sixth, He desires to reveal His heavenly glory and the enduring name of the Father to His disciples. Thus in the presence of the Father, He girds Himself with the glory of His own being, human and divine, recounts His divine and human ministries, gathers His disciples in the unity of Christian faith, and then bears them into the very presence of God, the Father.

As John states with historic accuracy and philosophic insight, we have before us the prayer of Jesus, for prayer is a human act and a human attitude of mind. Prayer is man's method of approach to God, and we easily observe that as Jesus draws near to God, His approach is not obstructed by doubt or sin or ignorance or even His humanity, considered individually or as man's representative.



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His prayer, indeed, is the prayer of humanity, and humanity at its best. As the appropriate expression of holy life and holy love, prayer must become the effective means of cultivating both, and hence also a true standard of personal development. Measured by this standard and by His ordinary practice through life, Jesus might be styled the man of prayer, with no one to share the honored title.

Jesus addresses the Father without effort of thought or stress of feeling, as though He is easily and at once conscious of God as Father and Himself as Son. This conception of Himself and this knowledge of His relation to the Father become the basis of His prayer, as they have been the secure foundation of His teaching. He needs no change of mind or will in coming to God, for His relation to God remains forever the same. Even prayer, which brings the soul up to its highest intensity of consciousness, reveals no defect in His doctrine or disappointment in His purpose. He fully realizes that the hour of His suffering has come. In memory He keeps the record of His life and labor, and now presents Himself before the Father as prepared for the great task which will engage His whole being.

Jesus prays for Himself as man's Redeemer, Whose work nears its completion, and also, as though a distant yet distinct echo from the first chapter, for the restoration of the glory of His deity, which He enjoyed in association with the Father before the creation of the world. The years of His human life subdued and restrained and limited His deity. Earth can bestow no glory, no

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greatness on the Son of man. This world cannot crown the Son of God! His glory comes from the Father. He will not even glorify Himself, for He seeks not His own glory lest He become self-seeking and self-centered. He glorifies the Father in His exercise of authority over all flesh, bestowing eternal life upon all whom the Father gives to Him. The knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, this is eternal life, mediated and ministered to men on earth. His declarations in prayer before God harmonize also with His statements to the people. But how are we to construe in our thought His petition, "Glorify Thou Me with Thine own self?" Does His human and divine nature demand God, the Father, as its perfect satisfaction? His teaching in reference to Himself, which is so definite in doctrine, which reveals a spirit so calm under all circumstances, so consistent in thought and life, so comprehensive in aim and ideal, convinces us that His consciousness is Divine as well as human, and thus prepares us to answer our own question with a positive affirmation.

And now Jesus prays for His disciples, who had received His words and who knew that He had come forth from God. He prays for them, but not for the world. His disciples have become the chosen channel of His blessing to men, and through their agency He will act in His perpetual appeal to men. His disciples are Christ's and the Father's conjointly by right of redemption. He manifested to them the name of the Father, but the Father gave them to Him out of the world, and this con-

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stitutes their joint ownership. Once more He prays for them, addressing God as "Holy Father," and asking Him to keep them in His Own name in order that they may enter the unity of the divine life. Christ had kept them, and none was lost under His guardianship, save one, in fulfillment of Scripture. This co-operation of the Son with the Father and of the Father with the Son, appears again and again, and conveys an essential truth respecting the divinity of Christ. In the presence of God, the Father, Jesus Christ still bears the likeness of deity, and we affirm what John has already asserted, His self-existence, His association with God, and His actual deity. He looks with open countenance into the face of God and lives, lives as He longs to live, lives as He is able to live, lives as His own being requires Him to live. There He rests and there He remains in the bosom of the Father, from whence He considers with divine interest the disciples whom He leaves in the world and in the Father's care. Yet again He prays for His disciples that they may be sanctified in the truth. They were to be set apart for a sacred use, as the word signifies in the Old Testament. Separation and not holiness is His thought, but separation, not from what is impure, but from what is common. The word appears in the Old Testament with reference to persons and things which were no longer common, because set apart for God's peculiar service. The work of their personal redemption must be completed, and the word of God, which He has given them, will work this result as it enables them

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to detect the evils and overcome the trials they must endure while they remain in the world. As Christians, they are not of the world, and hence they must be perfected on the plan of Christian life. They are to be sanctified in the truth as an end in itself, and then also they can be sent forth as God's representatives in the world. Character is an essential part of the Christian's commission. To lift them to this level, to aid them in their sanctification, Jesus sanctifies Himself, thereby illustrating and enforcing His word by His example. The full weight of His authority and the essential value of His leadership rest upon this principle of His teaching; His statement, I have given them Thy word; His prayer, sanctify them in the truth; His example, for their sakes I sanctify Myself.

Lastly, Jesus prays for those who believe on Him through the word of His disciples without any limitation of time or place, of race or nation, for He desires that they may enter the spiritual unity of all believers and share the association of the divine life. His prayer reaches out through believers in all ages, that the world may know by means of the unity of believers that the Father sent the Son as the world's Savior. As an additional aid to the spirituality and the unity of believers, Christ has given to them the glory of God, which rested upon Him, the glory of a sanctified life and a sacred service.

In closing His prayer, if we may so speak, Jesus desires to reveal His glory to His disciples in the presence of the Father, where divine love flows for-

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ever unhindered and where divine life fulfills in itself the ends of existence. He adores the Father as righteous, Whom the world knows not in His real character or essential being, but Whom Christ knows and reveals to His disciples, that the love of God may reach down through Christ to the least of those who believe in Him and thus constitute the divine life of the Christian, so that Christ can see Himself in His own, a recognition that becomes mutual in the company of all holy beings.

Our Lord amplifies His doctrine of God by His practice in prayer. Not through the forms of religion as these then existed did Jesus here make His approach to God, but simply in prayer, through His own consciousness, His own personality, just as men are taught to do, whatever aids they may find in religious forms and religious fellowship. God is a Spirit; they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. Since Jesus has made plain the principle that "access to God is the privilege of human personality," let no man lightly forfeit his birthright.

Jesus addresses God as Father, Holy Father, righteous Father, in His prayer, in perfect consistency with His previous preaching. His deepest consciousness reveals no other sense of God, and we may say here in anticipation of our subsequent study that in death as well as in life, this name was true to Him. He knows Himself as the Son and God as His Father. He speaks of Himself as "Thy Son," and "the Son." Like a Son, He makes request of the Father, and like a Son, He offers His obedience to the Father. He co-operates with God

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in carrying out His plans and purposes, acting not as a subordinate, but right on the level of deity. If He gives Himself in the work of human redemption, He also asks the Father to "glorify the Son with Thine own self." He is the Son in asking and receiving, and His Sonship rings true to Him as a metaphysical reality, and cannot be regarded merely as a doctrine originated by man's genius, constructed by human thought, and adopted by the devotion of His disciples.

The authority of Jesus is God-given and extends to all mankind. No mere man could receive or exercise such authority. No mere man could sustain such an assumption. Practically He exercised God-given authority, "speaking and it was done, commanding and it stood fast." He directs the soul with absolute confidence and forgives sin with palpable evidence of the fact and with personal satisfaction to the sinful soul. He enters the inner life of the spirit and there reveals what God and the soul alone know, and this He does with convincing effect upon the mind thus illuminated by His presence. He passes judgment on human acts and human beings and corroborates conscience. No mere man could exercise authority as He did for three years, much less for all the troubled ages. No mere man could actually place himself beneath such a burden of responsibility for a single moment.

Eternal life is defined as the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, Whom He hath sent. It is more than natural life or conscious existence. It is life in the ethical sense, or conscious existence after the

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likeness of God, in Whose image man was made. Jesus knows what it is, for He proposes to bestow it upon men. It is the knowledge of the two, God and Christ, and not of either one alone. The knowledge of the one implies the knowledge of the other, for the knowledge of Jesus Christ leads to perfect, personal knowledge of God. On the basis of the essential deity of Christ, there is no unfounded assumption here, but only a consistent carrying out of a great truth. Eternal life has its source in God and in Jesus Christ, Who comes to reveal God to men that this knowledge may govern their whole being. This knowledge reconstitutes the man by means of a real personal relation to God.

Jesus announces the completion of His God-given task of revelation and redemption even before it becomes a historic fact. In the steadfast mind and heart of Christ, the work is complete in all its particulars and all its essential truth. Failure has not marked His pathway nor marred His purpose. He works toward a definite end, thus affording opportunity for defeat, actual and evident, but He shows results at every stage of progress, and comes in due time to His chosen conclusion. His success is not fortuitous or uncertain, but the intelligent accomplishment of a mighty task.

Perhaps we are not prepared to hear Him invoke upon Himself the glory of the Father's selfhood, a glory such as He had before the creation of the world. Here He plainly shows the consciousness of a life which He lived before He appeared on earth. Through the years of His human life,

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however, He has not abdicated His authority in the kingdom of God or renounced His deity, but lives in view of His pre-existent life and of His final return to God. Even now He claims the full divine life and the completer association with God, the Father, than His earth-life allowed. He responds to God, the Father, in terms of Deity and Sonship. If we cannot anticipate the movement of His mind, can we not follow Him in His prayer reverently and intelligently, and appreciate the logic of His life, the consistency of His doctrine, and the conclusion to which He comes, the knowledge of God as self-existent and self-revealing?

He states in plainest terms and in perfect confidence the fact that He had manifested God to men and had given His words to them, a great task, greater than that entrusted to Moses in the giving of the law, which entailed no personal hardship save as men were slow to understand. It is a task for a divine Person Who easily knows the doctrine He teaches, Whose example illustrates and enforces His words, Whose power equals His wisdom, and Whose humility is measured by His greatness. On one side of the equation let us place man's fallen nature, his ignorance, and his unbelief; and on the other, let us place God, God in Christ, personally and sacrificially revealing Himself to men.

Earnest, intelligent men received the words of Christ as coming from God, and Christ Himself as sent by God, men who were thoughtful, men who were skeptical, men who were hard to convince. Such men became His disciples and learned to know



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what it meant to belong to the Christ and to the Father. Carrying out the conception of joint ownership, Jesus prays that as He had kept His disciples, even so the Father may keep them in the life divine. They will be hated by the world while they are in any way related to it and while their supreme relationship to Christ governs their thoughts and actions.

His prayer claims the ideal and the actual unity of all believers among themselves as an object of His desire, and then also the corresponding unity with Himself and with God. Believers must all base their lives on the same fundamental principles, or, shall we say, the same fundamental Persons. They are all to reach the same conclusions in essentially the same way. They are all to live the same life as a perpetual testimony and a convincing evidence to the world. The dewdrop must reflect the sun as a law of its own existence. Men of the world may not read the Word of God, but they must behold the living believer who cannot logically disown his relation to his fellow believers or his relation to Christ and God.

This prayer of Jesus lifts His disciples up into the higher altitudes of holy life. It directs their minds to the four objects for which Christ prays in their behalf and which Christians should daily desire, preservation, sanctification, unity, and final glory in Christ's company. They feel the uplifting pressure of His divine desire that they may be with Him where He is, in the very presence of the Father, in conscious harmony and personal fellow-

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ship with Him. Only there can they behold His glory and really enter His life, with all its aims and ideals and activities, its honors and associations and outlook, as these are constituted in the kingdom of God. Only there can they see Him as the Son of God and the Savior of the world, Who has a regal right to their perfect confidence, their perfect devotion, and their perfect service. Only there can they perceive the love of the Father for Him and for the race He represents: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

The Son's absolute knowledge of the Father issues in His absolute revelation of Him in His practical teaching, His perfect example, His mighty works, His profound prayer, His vicarious death, His promised resurrection. His consciousness contains no doubt of His deity, as it holds none concerning His humanity, and he is a happy man whose consciousness retains no lurking fear, no lingering doubt on either point, but is clarified in the settled conviction that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Savior of men. Happy is the man who builds his life, interior and exterior, upon this secure foundation, which is low enough for men to attain in time and high enough for them to rest upon in eternity.

The prayer of Jesus reveals to us a Person Who has both a human and a divine consciousness, Who holds converse and communion with God in His human consciousness and by means of human lan-

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guage unhindered by sin and ignorance and doubt, and Who thus records His perfect harmony with God and His personal fellowship with Him. The human consciousness of Christ has made its own record in His prayer. It is not lost in the divine, nor does the divine destroy the human or in any way obscure it by excess of light. The lower consciousness rings true to the higher and the higher pervades the lower. The deity of Christ is thus a metaphysical reality that reveals itself in the Christian consciousness of the child of God and also through his Christian activity when he co-operates with Christ in winning a human spirit from its old conscious existence to a new conscious life personally related to Christ and God.

We may note with some surprise that Jesus does not speak of the Holy Spirit in His high priestly prayer. In this, as in all His teaching and all His acts He shows that His approach to God, the Father, is unmediated as well as unobstructed. His approach is direct and personal, face to face. Men come to God in prayer through the mediation of Christ and by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, Who is sent by the Father and the Son. They cannot rise to God unaided and alone. God's approach to them in Christ, as a Savior, and by the Holy Spirit, as a Sanctifier, precedes their approach to God. Not so with this wonderful One Whose prayer we study with awe, if not with adoration. He presses into the very presence of the Father, breathing the very spirit of truth and love and obedience, and claiming Him as the real answer to His

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prayer and the real correlate of His being. The Son belongs to the Father and the Father to the Son through the invisible Spirit, Person answering to Person in the organic unity of the Holy Trinity.

As we survey the seventeenth chapter of John, we are enabled to formulate certain facts which concern our own religious life. We are instructed as well as impressed as we listen to Jesus praying as a man and as a religious leader. He is our example in His thought and spirit, and especially as regards the result or answer to prayer which concerns us and often perplexes us so deeply. His prayer is based on His personal relation to the Father, the true foundation for all our prayers. He prays to the Father without mediation, just as we should expect Him to do, and says what no creature could say in prayer to God, "Glorify Me that I may glorify Thee." He renders to God as well as receives from God. His prayer has all the parts of prayer—the address to deity, thanksgiving in spirit if not in form, petition, consecration, confession of obedience, and adoration. The order of His thought is as unconventional as it is unconstrained, moving with perfect freedom under the weight of the greatest responsibility and under the inspiration of the greatest themes. The human prayer of Jesus almost blends with the divine answer, the deferred answer in event following fittingly the immediate answer in the realm of harmonious, personal life. History has given us, and is still giving us, the Father's answer to the Savior's prayer, an answer which is racial as well as individual in its content

## **The Prayer of Jesus**

and significance. Centuries of human life are here enfolded in the thought of Christ, as the oak is wrapped in the acorn.

John alone has given us the record of this luminous prayer of Jesus, a prayer which not only concludes, but also crowns his chapters on the spiritual life; which fits his philosophy of being and life and salvation; which points to the completion of the divine life of men; which directs disciples in all ages in their personal approach to God.



PART V  
The Divine Redeemer





## CHAPTER XXIII.

### CHRIST AT THE BAR OF HUMAN JUDGMENT.

The quick descent from the sublime heights of the seventeenth chapter to the dark depths of the eighteenth takes place as Jesus goes forth with His disciples, crosses the Kidron, and enters the Garden of Gethsemene. The contrast is more evident and more impressive than that which appears between the twelfth, in which the public entry is described, and the thirteenth, in which Jesus renders the most menial service. There He drops from the king to the servant, but here He steps down from the presence of the Father to answer at the bar of human judgment.

From the very beginning, His appeal has been to men, His service has been offered to them, His life has been lived among them. He has been One among them, but now He places Himself in their hands. They are permitted to weigh Him in the balance of human judgment and even sentence Him according to the behest of the human will. To secure such a result, men must be free, free to do with the divine Christ as they will, free so far as He is concerned, however they may be constrained by personal prejudice and personal interest, by fear of foes and respect for established authority, by choice of an easy solution of a hard problem according to which one innocent person perishes to save the many and above all, to preserve the nation.

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The prayer of Jesus prepares Him for the betrayal in the garden, though we may be inclined to think it could only unfit Him for such a rude rejection. For all the other great events of His life, prayer was His preparation. It kept Him in harmony with heaven and fostered the wisdom of obedience to God and the courage of a settled purpose. Perfectly prepared in mind and heart, He went forth to the place where Judas found Him, for Judas knew the place and the habit of the Master, who "oft-times resorted thither with His disciples." Jesus has no thought of outwitting Judas by doing the unaccustomed thing and thus saving Himself without a conflict. His mind moves in its appointed channel, and, lest the reader should miss the voluntary acceptance of His arrest and its consequences, John tells us that "Jesus therefore, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth and saith unto them, Whom seek ye?" He makes Himself known to His betrayer and His captors, and by so much aids them in carrying out their purpose to apprehend Him.

Once at least, Judas appears as a leader among men, and not as a follower; once he stands at the front and not at the rear; once he directs the movements of men and is not under the direction of another. For one brief moment he is free, free to act as his own will demands. His conscience seems to be quiescent, while his intellect may be active. Perhaps he thinks his deed will only call out the power and the purpose of the Christ and precipitate the establishment of His kingdom. Perhaps he is

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tired of the continued uncertainty which seemed to fill so many minds. Perhaps he desired Jesus to declare His Messiahship in terms of earthly kingdoms and earthly rulers. But whatever his thought and whatever his purpose, Judas proves to be an unsafe religious leader. Behold him at the head of "the band of soldiers, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees," with their lanterns and torches and weapons. As their leader, he is standing with them and facing Christ in active opposition. He has failed to bring his mind into harmony with the mind of Christ and his will into submission to the will of Christ, and his failure writes his history at this crucial point. It seems natural to him to do just what he is doing, however unnatural it may appear to all the world besides. Nor does Jesus appeal to him to change places, to lay aside his leadership and become a follower again, to repent of his traitorous intent and thus prevent the arrest. On the contrary, He calmly accepts the course of divine Providence, including the agency of His arrest and the entire combination of circumstances and events. Once, just once, Jesus is subject to Judas, and the purpose of Judas prevails. Once, at least once, the thought of Judas seems to coincide with the thought of God, and Jesus is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

The first failure to lay hands upon Jesus, without any apparent exercise of power on His part, might have served to show the inferiority of Judas, supported as he was by the cohort of soldiers, a number deemed sufficient to more than "match a mir-

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acle," and by the officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees. If Jesus exerts no power in His own behalf, His authority yet clings to Him. He offers Himself to them and requests them to let His disciples go free, while He forbids His disciples to make defense. "I told you that I am He; if, therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way." They need cause you no trouble as you need cause them none. To His disciples He says, "Put up the sword into the sheath: the cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" He accepts His arrest voluntarily, or shall we not rather say with perfect knowledge of its full significance, the only way it could be consummated by One Who is the Son of God. He must submit to, and even co-operate with, men who are out of harmony with Him. Their evil intentions are their own, and form a dark background on which the purity of His purpose shines out in clearest outline and severest contrast.

The man who was the agent of His betrayal and the men who were the instigators of His arrest, all failed to realize the results they anticipated and desired. The leadership of Judas lasted for a few short moments of time, but it led to consequences which neither he nor the Jewish leaders had calculated. Judas may have been disappointed when Jesus failed to exert His power in self-deliverance, while the Jewish leaders must have been disappointed because the death of Jesus failed to remove Him from human history as a factor and a force, but rather perfected and extended His power.

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After His death and resurrection, Jesus becomes a Person of divine presence and power, even in the estimation of His enemies, who are often at a loss to know just how to reckon with Him. Before His death, Judas ends his leadership of opposition to Him by self-destruction, as though this were the only adequate remedy suggested by a troubled mind and an accusing conscience. Judas had thought of Christ untruly and as He was not, until he could not think of Him truly, and as He was, "the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sin of the world." The tragic end of Judas' life has no place in John's Gospel, nor has his confession of his sin and his assertion of Jesus' innocence, but John tells us enough to convince us that no quick reversal of mental action and even moral judgment are sufficient to work a reformation of character. The psychology of the sinful soul reveals conscience aroused, intellect active, and the will at work, but no Christ. Eternal life is the knowledge of Christ and God, and eternal death must then be just the opposite. In New Testament usage, death means separation from God, not in the sense of being physically or metaphysically outside of Him, but in the sense of having different moral aims and ideals, different spiritual plans and purposes; a different state of mind and atmosphere of being, in which the mind and will of God are neither welcome nor dominant factors. The man who deliberately excludes himself from the life and love, the purity and holiness of God, must discover, sooner or later, an accurate description of himself

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in the Scripture language, "without God and without hope in the world." He has broken the pitcher at the fountain where the thirsty soul requires it most.

The betrayal by Judas is followed closely in John's record of events by Peter's threefold denial. They led Jesus to Annas first, but He was arraigned also before Caiaphas, the high priest, who had already given counsel "that it was expedient that one man should die for the people." If he had not thus really prejudged the case, he had, at least, laid down the principle on which his anticipated sentence could easily and plausibly be reached. The questions of the high priest called forth the statement from the prisoner that His teaching was entirely in public and that His hearers could testify concerning the doctrine He taught. He also made the dignified demand that He should have fair treatment for right conduct in presence of the court. While Jesus is being examined by these two officers of the Jewish hierarchy, Peter is being questioned concerning his connection with Jesus.

While Jesus had but recently foretold Peter's denial, this foreknowledge of the fact has apparently nothing to do with bringing it to pass. It had no effect whatever on the causes which brought it about, no influence in shaping the incidents or determining the surroundings, no power over Peter to guard him in the place of temptation, or even guide him in avoiding it. The foreknowledge of the denial and the prediction of the denial, even to Peter himself, in no way aided in producing it. The

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knowledge belongs to Jesus, and the act is Peter's alone. Incidents fit freely, each in its place, and Peter moves on, step by step, to his threefold fall. His ardent love for the Master drew him close to Him, while his fear of His enemies caused him to deny his Lord. Contrary to all expectation, Jesus is apparently shorn of His power, and His leadership seems to have reached its limit. The Jewish ecclesiastics have publicly expressed their relentless opposition and have successfully invoked the power of the Roman governor to execute their will. Must men still confess Him and thereby imperil their own lives, or does wisdom kindly point out another path?

Peter read his own heart and said, I will lay down my life for Thee. Jesus read the same heart at the same moment and said, The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice. Emotional and impulsive as Peter surely was, a single denial under the sudden stress of unexpected temptation might seem quite possible, when a second and third would appear to be entirely out of the range of possibility. To be sure, failure only leads to further failure unless a powerful reaction results. But here the cause of the denial was not removed and the effect appeared again and again. Peter is awake to the influences about him, and his mind and will act accordingly. How grandly he had confessed Christ in the company of His followers as their best spokesman, while now he denies Him in the company of His enemies as though he were one of them. Sincerely devoted to Jesus in mind and in heart, yet in presence of personal danger, and perhaps even

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of death, he yielded for the moment to the enemies of His Lord. They exercise a controlling influence over his mind and even govern his will for a short space of time, and his thrice repeated denial shows us a man bowing in abject submission to man when he might have been standing up at his full height in courageous confession of his faith in Jesus Christ as "the Holy One of God."

Prophecy had long before asserted that the Messiah would tread the wine press alone, and now history writes the fact in terms of its own selection without any reference to prophecy. Men wonder at the outcome of history, as well as the divine anticipation of history as recorded in prophecy. Yet truth is not two things, but only one, and as the truth, Jesus Christ is the vital element in both history and prophecy. He is the touch-stone of character and the interpretation of personality. He knew Peter better than Peter knew Peter. Three years of teaching by the greatest of all Teachers, three years of association with the divine Christ, all this set aside for the moment and rendered inoperative by the question of a maid! Fear has yet more power than faith, and Peter is evidently not ready to die for Christ. Christ must first die for Peter before Peter can truly, lovingly, triumphantly die for Christ, or even live for Him.

Denial is not betrayal, far from it. Judas was not warned by Jesus of his evil purposes which led to evil deeds and evil consequences. He is rather permitted to proceed on his own chosen course with every obstacle removed. Betrayal meant loss of faith



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in Christ, partial if not total, and willingness to join with the enemies of Jesus, and then also the complete surrender of Jesus to them. Denial meant the desire to follow Jesus in sincere devotion, submission to the enemies of Jesus through fear, and then also the momentary separation of himself from Jesus by his own act of assertion. But here as before Peter misreads himself. He *is* "one of this man's disciples" as a fact of the past and in the faith of the future. He *is* allied with Jesus in thought and life, in hope and aspiration. Here he was mistaken in his knowledge of himself, just as he was mistaken and failed completely when he measured himself by the divine standard of devotion. When the Christian desires to know who he is, and what he can do, let him inquire of the only One Who really knows, and without Whose aid he can do nothing in God's spiritual kingdom. Peter's denial shook his confidence in himself to its very foundations, but Christ's confidence in Peter subsequently became the sure foundation on which his impulsive nature could securely rest.

Betrayed by Judas, denied by Peter, and tried by Annas, Caiaphas, and Pilate, Jesus is repeatedly measured by men, He is weighed again and again in the scales of human judgment. Perhaps in each case we may discover abundant reason to affirm misjudgment or even personal and official vindication of the prisoner, with the final result of his condemnation and death unchanged. One verdict and only one could satisfy the Jewish rulers, and that one they secured by clamor and threat rather than

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by means of evidence. Human judgment is part will and part reason, and its real value must be measured by the relative weight of these two ingredients, as well as the quality of each. Divine judgment expresses breadth and depth of intelligence which is never narrowed or betrayed by the action of the will. The divine intelligence is sustained by the divine will, and never perverted by it. "Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief; when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand." By divine decree as well as by human judgment, Jesus must die, a co-operation of will that is in no sense a concert of purpose or mental action. In the mind of God, Jesus dies a vicarious death in order to accomplish human redemption; in the minds of the Jewish rulers He dies as a disturber of the peace, He dies that the old order may continue to exist, that the new doctrine may disappear, that they may crush once for all the religious movement which has sprung like a shoot from the old system, and, in short, that they may continue to be the religious leaders of the nation, if not also of the race.

In his narrative, John does not record all the movements in the trial of Jesus, but just such facts as will show how the verdict of condemnation was reached. Jesus is brought bound before Annas and then Caiaphas, the former closely related to the latter and the latter having already anticipated the outcome of the case. The only defense of Jesus is

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His innocence as an individual, a citizen, and a teacher. He claims His right under the law not to offer testimony against Himself, but appeals with confidence to His hearers as competent witnesses respecting His teaching and His influence. From the Jewish court He is led to the Prætorium, into the presence of the Roman governor. To prevent defilement, the Jews enter not, for they must eat the Passover. Externalism takes the best possible care of itself, for that is all there is of it either to save or to lose. A touch may taint, but the **unjust** thought, the irrational hatred, the malevolent will, these can be harbored without sense of sin or danger of pollution! Strange contradictions continually confront the man whose will overmasters his conscience and his reason. Unexpected results arise in the path of any company or combination of men who undertake to reverse the poles of moral judgment in order to vindicate the guilty and condemn the innocent.

Pilate proceeds according to the Valerian law and also shows his official respect for the Jewish rulers, when he goes out to inquire of them, "What accusation bring ye against this man?" Their answer assumes that they are satisfied as to His guilt, and therefore they now deliver Him to Pilate for sentence rather than retrial or a review of their proceedings. "If this man were not an evil doer we should not have delivered Him unto thee." But Pilate knows the accusers as well as the accused, and would willingly relieve himself of responsibility by leaving the Jews to judge Jesus. "Take Him

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yourselves and judge Him according to your law," but they at once reply, "it is not lawful for us to put any man to death." The death sentence is what they desire, and nothing short of this will satisfy their insistent demand. In an age when human life was held cheap, and at a time when the Roman governor desired to cultivate the good will of the Jewish rulers, this confession of their purpose plainly revealed to Pilate the task before him as the price of their favor.

Hence, Pilate returns to the Prætorium and the prisoner, and questions Him once more in order to discover grounds for conviction or for release. Pilate shows a certain knowledge of Jesus by his question, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Jesus answers by asking a question also, a question that points to Pilate's possible personal interest in Him. As a ruler, Pilate never before came in conflict with Jesus. If Jesus is the King of the Jews, it must be in a sense that has in no way interfered with him as governor. Pilate's personal knowledge should therefore lead him to have a personal interest in the One before him. "Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee concerning Me?" Jesus addresses him as a man rather than a judge, while Pilate understands the appeal to his manhood, and asks his second question, "Am I a Jew?" He scorns the thought he has himself suggested and likewise the idea that he might be interested in the religious teaching and life of the Jewish people. This is a trial and not a conference. "Thine own nation

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and the chief priests delivered Thee unto me; what hast Thou done?"

In answer to Pilate's questions, and in self-defense also, Jesus asserts that His kingdom is not of this world, not a kingdom supported by force like all earthly kingdoms, not a kingdom that has its origin here, its history, and also its end. He is a King by birth and by appointment, Who has undertaken to establish truth and righteousness in the earth and Who is the real leader of all who desire holiness in character and righteousness in conduct. "Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." Such admissions in the presence of a Roman ruler might become most serious, but in this case they awaken no suspicion of seditious designs, and hence Pilate publicly declares, "I find no crime in Him."

And now Pilate proposes an easy compromise, or, shall we say, an immediate settlement of the case by means of the referendum. He appeals to the people to deliver Jesus, knowing full well His popularity and knowing also the envy of the Jewish rulers. He will pit the many against the few and win the verdict he desires. He proposes, therefore, according to custom, to release one at the Passover. "Will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?" But Pilate has miscalculated, and the only cry that greets his ears proclaims the rejection of Jesus, with the alternative request that another be liberated as the popular choice, and thus

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the referendum failed to secure justice for the innocent and punishment for the guilty. His compromise by which the unproved charge against Jesus is accounted true, and yet Jesus is liberated by the voice of the people, failed also, and Jesus remains on the hands of His human judge.

Passing over into the nineteenth chapter, we find Pilate dealing with the Jews as well as with Jesus. His case is simple, theirs is more than complex, it is complicated. Three times publicly he declared, "I find no crime in Him," yet his sentence wins no popular support and by steady pressure their will overrides and finally overrules the judge and wins the desired decision. Pilate becomes the advocate of His innocence and also the instrument of His condemnation; such is the conflict in the mind of this man who had asked Jesus, What is truth? without awaiting an answer, or even perceiving the truth as it is revealed in the Person of the One Who, in that trying hour, stood before him, silent and serene.

When Pilate scourges Jesus, according to the Roman custom, and permits the soldiers to ridicule Him as a self-constituted King, he takes up his task again with a more serious purpose to reach the conclusion of a case that is fast becoming more serious to court and accusers, to people and prisoner. Truth is not an easy mark for the indifferent nor an agreeable subject for the worldly wise, yet truth claims the attention of every man, and even challenges the personal acceptance or rejection of each. No man can place himself beyond its fron-

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tiers and thus free himself from its claims. No man can escape the influence of Jesus, Whose presence in human history and Whose mission as man's Redeemer brings Him to the door of every human heart, where He demands the serious attention of every man. No official position can hide a man from the truth which appears in its perfection in the Person of Christ.

Pilate evidently desires to appease the Jews and also to liberate Jesus. The judge becomes the advocate, but truth permits no exchange of office or compromise with evil. Does Pilate appeal to their compassion when he presents Him wearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment, and says, "Behold, the man!" Their instant cry, "Crucify Him, crucify Him," reveals at last their implacable purpose, and yet he would fain vindicate his honor and relieve himself of personal responsibility by giving the prisoner into their power. "Take ye Him yourselves, and crucify Him; for I find no crime in Him." They assert in reply that according to their law He ought to die because He made Himself the Son of God. These chief priests understood His teaching and His claim. They were not so much in doubt as they once thought they were. The great fact He asserted and demonstrated was the particular thing they resisted and rejected. Truth is never a compromise. It is an independent reality. He revealed Himself to men, and in the process of doing so, revealed them also in their pretension and self-seeking. He must die therefore, because His death is their only possible vindication.

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Thus only could their character be cleared of sin, their leadership maintained, and their honor upheld.

Fear had entered the stout Roman's heart, but when he heard the real charge of the Jews, which reflected Christ's own confession, "he was the more afraid." As though he had entered the prisoner's box by way of the bar, he comes again to the judgment seat, receiving no answer to the question, "Whence art Thou?" for how could Jesus give any answer that would satisfy his mind? One question Jesus answers, "Knowest thou not that I have power to release Thee, and have power to crucify Thee?" and answers it in a way that even Pilate can appreciate. "Thou wouldst have no power against Me except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin." The prisoner is neither ignorant nor unconscious of His own standing before the court. He even knows the ultimate source of Pilate's power and the greater sin of the Jews, as compared with that of Pilate. No earthly ruler reigns in his own personal right, and sin has its degrees according to this wonderful prisoner, Who makes no plea for His own life aside from His innocence, Who exalts justice and righteousness and God, Who hears the clamor of His accusers and faces His judge without fear.

Jesus has made an impression upon a hard Roman heart, for Pilate sought to release Him; but the Jews cried out, saying, "If thou release this man thou art not Cæsar's friend." The fear of man proves to be more powerful than the fear of God.



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The love of place overmasters the love of justice. Pilate must demonstrate his devotion to Cæsar, and in this instance he must do it in keeping with the Jewish conception, even though he would prefer to own his relation to God according to the conception of Jesus. He makes one last effort to pacify a turbulent people. He sits in judgment before them and says in futile appeal, "Behold, your King! Shall I crucify your King?" The answer of the chief priests, "We have no king but Cæsar," brings at once the desired sentence of the court and crystallizes the national life around an earthly ruler whose power waned and whose kingdom passed away.

The Jews win the sentence they desire, while the judge still publicly protests, "I find no crime in Him," the true judgment of the court which should have governed court and prosecution. But when man sets his will in absolute opposition to Jesus Christ and God, Whom He reveals, even God, in His good providence, and Jesus Christ, in His holy love, respect that will so far as the execution of its evil purpose is concerned. No man can truthfully say to God, I am not free, morally free, yet no man can measure arms with the Almighty. In this test case, the will of man fails to overreach or overthrow the will of God. The will of man works the death of Christ in order to eliminate Him as a Jewish citizen, a religious teacher, and a world force. The will of God works the death of Christ in order that Christ may be perfected as a racial man, a religious leader, and a world-force in human redemp-

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tion. No man and no combination of men can overrule the Judge of all the earth, Who will do right, Who loves righteousness and hates iniquity, and Whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.

Forever Jesus appears wherever He once has been. He still stands at the bar of human judgment, and men are free to betray Him or deny Him with results such as we have just seen, or even try Him, reaching the old conclusion, contradictory as it is, theoretical vindication and practical condemnation. They can survey the course and outcome of His life; they can see His influence in the life of the race, active and uplifting; they can behold Him vindicated at the bar of divine justice as the Savior of the world, Who enables God to be just and the justifier of all who believe. They are free to acknowledge His claims and then reject His leadership, but they are free also to accept both with a faith and a fervor that answer His appeal and that rest in the sweet confidence that here is the One Who sitteth King forever.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### CRUCIFIED, DEAD, AND BURIED, OR THE PROMISE FULFILLED.

The acts of men lack the majesty of the acts of God. Men may assume to sit in judgment upon the Christ and condemn Him to die, but their process of law and their sentence of death fail to convince our reason or command our conscience. As we study the men who placed the Christ upon the cross, we are convinced that they have not risen to their opportunity, they have not honored their law, they have not even accomplished their purpose. They have worked within the narrow limits of their own prejudice and passion. If they listened to His wonderful words of wisdom, it was to misinterpret them; if they saw His mighty miracles, it was to reject their testimony; if they looked upon Him Whom they had pierced, it was only to mock Him.

Perhaps the only majesty in human character and conduct is derived from God, Whose thoughts are higher than our thoughts and Whose ways are higher than our ways. Perhaps the very record of man's condemnation of Christ could not have survived the wrecks of time had not the death of Christ been divinely decreed. We speak of the majesty of the law, which, in the crises of history, impresses us greatly, but let us not forget the majesty of God, Who makes the wrath of man to praise Him, Who perfects His plan of human redemption unhindered, Who so loved the world that He gave His only be-

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gotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have eternal life.

Here is One Who never does things by halves, Whose work is perfect, and Whose ways are past finding out. Man's intelligence is not sufficient of itself to discover God, but God's goodness is sufficient to provide that patient revelation of Himself to all men in all ages of the world that enables them to know Him with all the certainty such knowledge demands. God sends His Son into the world to live for men, to teach them truth and duty, to heal both body and mind, to demonstrate His divine power and wisdom and love by acts of benevolence and by a sinless example which has no human parallel. But this is not enough. He must endure the contradiction of sinners and suffer as one among them, suffer by reason of their effort to teach Him and form Him on their human plan of life and their human basis of being, while He, with better reason and better grace, is trying to reconstitute them according to the divine plan and on the divine basis. He must suffer betrayal and denial and trial at their hands, and stand at the bar of human judgment to answer for His life. He must be condemned as an evil doer, crucified as a criminal, and buried as one who is dead, for He must pass the low portal of death in order to complete the circle of human life as it is in sin and in order to lift it out of its narrow human horizon and give it the sweep and compass of the creative mind. The ascent of Solomon to his magnificent throne was by means of six steps, flanked by lifeless lions, while the descent of Jesus

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to the depths of human life was by a like number compassed about with living men. He Who thus descends is the One Who also ascends to the highest heaven, carrying His human nature into the very presence of God, and even incorporating it in the divine life. And thus we are assured there is no missing link in this chain of spiritual life that binds men back to God.

Pilate found no crime in Jesus, and therefore no ground for pronouncing the death sentence, but he found no way to placate the Jewish rulers without complying with their demands. Gladly would he have transferred to them the responsibility of the whole case or found reason to liberate his prisoner other than His innocence. He hesitated to condemn an innocent man, especially one who claimed to be the Son of God, and who was evidently no ordinary person. Pilate's purpose to release Jesus is rudely halted by the Jewish rulers challenging his loyalty to Cæsar. To save himself, he must surrender Christ, the common alternative which we may call the moral dilemma. Once more we see that Christ is more than an ordinary man thus to command or rather compel the moral choice. Pilate taunts these relentless Jewish leaders, but delivered Jesus unto them to be crucified.

"They took Jesus therefore"—now they have Him in their power, now they propose to end a long contention, now they will establish their authority and their leadership more firmly than ever. They are triumphant at last and no delay retards their victim's death. Like an ordinary criminal,

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Jesus bore His cross to the place of execution, or until He sank beneath the burden. "He went out bearing His cross for Himself." Like an extraordinary person, He was placed between two robbers and labeled in three languages, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." The objection of the chief priests to the form of this inscription shows that Pilate is in no temper to comply further with their demands, however reasonable. He is resentful and his mind is ill at ease. This sturdy Roman felt an ever-rising fear, if not reverence, in the presence of the Christ. Pilate knew men. He read character with accuracy and facility. His opinion of Jesus contained his certainty of His innocence before the law, and we know not how much more. Evidently he looked upon Jesus as no ordinary person, no mere religious enthusiast. Policy, and not principle, or even personal preference, led him on, step by step, to his distasteful decision, but if he yielded to the enemies of Jesus, he, in turn, compelled them to confess Cæsar as their King, a confession that can be retracted only by the confession of Christ.

John does not dwell upon the fact and manner of the crucifixion, but states both in the simplest terms and in the briefest possible way. His statement is historic and realistic, but without any effort for rhetorical effect. He appreciates the spiritual significance of this great event, and records certain attendant circumstances which an uninspired historian might regard as unimportant. He tells us that the four soldiers who executed Him divided

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His garments among them, and for His vesture they cast lots, "that the Scripture might be fulfilled." To his mind this fact appears more instructive, impressive, and convincing than the darkness and earthquake described elsewhere, material manifestations of the divine presence and power, because the minute fulfillment of Scripture after a thousand years calls for a minute, divine direction, and personal, divine agency among men who have no real knowledge of the spiritual meaning of Scripture and no real desire to fulfill it.

From the cross, Jesus commits His mother to the beloved disciple—a fact never to be forgotten by him—thus resigning, or rather transferring, to another the sacred duty of personal protection. Thus His human sympathy remained with Him to the end of His earthly life and left here this last record of its tender care and faithful forethought on the sensitive soul of His most intimate disciple. "And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home." He assumes the duty, he obeys the dying request, and tells us he obeyed the One Who had been so near to him, so dear, so divine, and withal, so human. In death as in life, in suffering as in service, Jesus is human, true yet tender, sinless yet sympathetic.

The dying Christ knows when His work is finished and the Scripture fulfilled. His voluntary suffering filled up the outline of prophecy. This voluntary element adds an essential factor which the annual sacrifices of the Jewish system could not furnish. The Son of God presents Himself as a

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personal volunteer to suffer death for man's sin and also for God's holiness. As for the sinner, self-surrender proves to be the crucial point, the King Himself anticipates this fact, becomes the one great example, and sets the fashion for the court. The New Testament as well as the Old affords no gospel for the disobedient man. Christ has measured Himself and His task, and declares that He has fulfilled the Scriptures, the divine thought of man, and finished His task of human redemption, the elimination of sin and unbelief, and the elaboration of faith and obedience as the perfection of the human spirit.

Jesus demonstrates on the cross that He is an intelligent Savior, a merciful Savior, a sufficient Savior. His moral judgment has not been warped or blunted, His mind remains active to the very last, His will is not embittered. He rightly reports the need of His body when He says, "I thirst." No delirium settles down upon Him, no pain has power to dethrone His reason, no doubt diverts Him from the completion of His chosen task, the salvation of a sinful race. Only when He had measured human life in the length and breadth and depth of its need, and then also in the height and reach of its possibility in holiness and happiness, does He finally declare, "It is finished." Then, and then only, did He bow His head and give up His spirit.

His death is His own free act for the salvation of a free being. "I have power to lay down My life and I have power to take it again. This commandment received I from My Father." He used



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His power thus divinely given for man's relief and man's redemption. As man, he is enlisted for man, and as God he is interested according to His nature and His capacity. Only this divine Person could fulfill the divine promise and thus complete the divine plan and purpose which never shrivel like autumn leaves, but forever remain vital, challenging our capacity to think God's thoughts after Him. Can any honest, earnest man look upon the Christ Whom John describes and not say, There is the Savior of the world? There is the Head of the human race? There is the representative of God, the chosen of God, the sent of God, the Son of God, Whose love anticipates my need, Whose life enriches my own, Whose will should guide and govern mine, Whose thought should illuminate my mind? Can any man say, in the presence of the cross, that John is describing an imaginary and not a real being? That John is writing fiction and not history? Then let him take the other choice and accept the Christ as being just what John declares Him to be, in life and death, the Son of man and the Son of God, man made in the image of God, and God manifest in the flesh.

Divine Providence is still operative and the throne of God is still occupied. The Jews request Pilate to order the breaking of the legs of the three sufferers on the three crosses in order to hasten death, and, as a consequence, the removal of their bodies. Amid their mental and moral conflicts they have maintained their regard for the sanctity of the Sabbath. They think, as they have always thought

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and as they must continue to think unless and until some master mind breaks the spell of their delusion. The spirit of man may incarcerate itself within the solid walls of custom, or even embalm itself with the spices and wrappings of some human system of religious teaching. Yet God lives, and ever and anon liberates the man who grows restive under unnatural restraint and really seeks spiritual freedom. God overrules the prayer of men in fulfillment of His Word. The soldiers break the legs of the first and the other one, but Jesus was dead already, and "not a bone of Him was broken," but His side was pierced by one of the soldiers, and thus Scripture was fulfilled by the exceptional act, as before by the exceptional omission. "They looked on Him Whom they had pierced." Providence finds room for the coarsest natures as well as the most refined, and the two may touch at a spear's point and then separate perhaps forever.

The crucified Christ has devoted friends as well as bitter enemies. As the hatred of His enemies subsides, the devotion of His friends rises again, and they claim the body for burial. Was Pilate glad to transfer the body to them? Was he regretful as well as resentful? By his permission they took the body from the cross, "bound it in linen cloths with spices and laid it in a new tomb wherein was never man yet laid." They know the Christ is dead and must be buried. The tomb and not the home must be the resting place of all that remains, the cold and lifeless body. Yet we may wonder why they did not bear the body of Jesus to the home

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in hope of His promised resurrection. The only answer is that this hope seems to have died when Jesus breathed His last, and only lived again when Jesus breathed life into it after His triumphant resurrection. Men cannot anticipate God. The risen Christ alone can fill up the outlines of His own thinking.

Jesus dies upon the cross according to His own interpretation of the divine plan and His own statement of the divine purpose. He lived a real, human life, and died a real, human death. In all points tempted like as we are, He was yet without sin, and sinless He suffered death, the penalty of sin, that that penalty might no longer be exacted of any man who believes in Him, whose life thus becomes a life of obedience to God, and whose death therefore becomes essentially sinless. He enters into real relations with man in order to bring man into salvable relations with God. The cross has become the most significant of earthly symbols, not because it involved the keenest physical suffering, but because it represents the most effective power to subdue and purify the heart, and especially because it stands for Christ's complete identification with sinful man. He fulfills the Scriptures under the immediate direction of divine Providence. Human agents gather about Him, divine beings minister to Him; both are interested and active, and by conflict and co-operation, by evil purposes and compromising acts of men, by the overruling will and wisdom of God, One is placed in our midst, One Whom John would have all men call the Son

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of God, their perfect and all-sufficient Savior. We read prophecy in history as it is here enacted before our eyes. The God Who is above all history, has entered history in the Person of Jesus Christ. Henceforth, He will rule it in the interests of His kingdom, and men are invited to read history, present and future, with reference to Him. If we are compelled to see man as he is by nature, limited as well as lifted by education and lured by honor, let us also behold him as we see him in Christ, man in moral harmony with God and unified within himself, man in the perfection of spiritual life, man in his real goodness and greatness, man in manhood and in ministry, man in his divine life and liberty, man enshrined in the mind and heart of God.

Have we lingered about the cross of Christ long enough to have learned its meaning? Long enough to have looked into the conscious spirit of Christ and then into our own? Nowhere else will we learn so well the sinfulness of sin, the power of sin, and the penalty of sin, or the gift and power and perfection of the salvation wrought out by Jesus Christ. Personal experience supplemented by the lessons of a superintending Providence must aid us in mastering the meaning of His death and thus prepare us to appreciate His promised resurrection. Only by a divine discipline can men be taught to keep step with divine Providence in the progressive unfolding of God's gracious plan of human redemption as it has its application in every age.

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As a Christian historian, a spiritual leader, and a religious thinker, John presents these darker scenes in the life of Jesus in their native colors and in their true perspective. He describes the death of Jesus as an historic event, a religious truth, and a logical necessity. He fits the death of Christ into the divine plan as this was declared by the prophets and by Christ Himself. He descends with Jesus to this lowest level of His life without endangering his own faith in His deity. Nor does he ever suspect that death has in any sense degraded his Hero. He offers no explanation concerning the death of a Person Whom he considers both human and divine. He writes as an eye-witness who was sure of the facts he states and as one who was far enough away from these impressive scenes to write an impartial record. He tells less than he knows, and knows nothing that would contradict or even modify what he has told.

This Galilean fisherman, this aggressive son of Zebedee, who became a modest apostle of Jesus Christ and the inspired author of the fourth Gospel, has drawn us close to Christ, close to His cross, close to His dead body, close to His borrowed tomb. Suffering still has its mystery and death its terrors. Disappointment and grief are not yet displaced by the victory of the resurrection and the joy it brought to many anxious hearts. Men must see what this faithful witness saw before they can appreciate the next movement in the wonderful process by which a world's Redeemer is perfected. Death adds no glory to the Person of Christ, but

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it unveils the glory that was already there, permitting it to break forth from many a rift and angle. Behold Him Who cannot die as a criminal without revealing His moral majesty and His saving power! Never man spake, never man lived, never man died like this man, with such an appeal to the human heart, such a power to answer its utmost need, such a promise of life and leadership awaiting its fulfillment. The darkness which gathers about Him becomes light, and the shadows flee before the glory of God in the face of His Anointed. The darkest spot on earth becomes the brightest because He Who is the light of the world once rested there.

Our faithful historian would enable us to see his Hero even in His humiliation. He wants us to see Him as He is reflected in the minds of men who are indifferent or hostile, and who are compelled to think of Him and act as they will. He invites us to see Him through his own mind and heart and spirit, which have been liberated by the truth and illuminated by the Spirit of God that it may be his crowning glory to tell a dying world of Him Who was crucified, dead, and buried in fulfillment of the promise made in the earlier dispensation.

The crucifixion is psychologically established because it holds a place of prime importance in the life and in the work of our Lord. It must, therefore, have a like importance in the life of men. Hence we are made to see just how it came about in history, how the innocent One was caused to suffer the extreme penalty of the law, how the

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self-seeking Jew and the self-confident Roman combined to accomplish this result, and how the redemptive purpose of God was carried to its completion. Men are free in thought and action, and yet God is supreme in both. He is supreme in wisdom and love, in justice and mercy. His supremacy appears at this crisis, not in an attitude of dictation, but in the manifest purpose to save. Upon Him Who thus enters man's life and assumes man's responsibility devolves the moral obligation of giving man law even as it is His pleasure to give him life. This law must be suited to this life, always expressing it and never limiting its normal development. It must be written in the mind and heart, and not on tables of stone. It must express the mind of God and illuminate the mind of man. Love, supreme love to God, with which must always be associated an equalizing love for fellow-man, answers all the conditions. It is both law and life and we behold it as it is visualized in the crucified Christ.

The ideas and the ideals of the first disciples were radically changed by the death of Christ. Materialistic conceptions of the person and work of the Messiah were finally effaced. The disciples ceased to think of the kingdom of God as an earthly kingdom. They freed themselves from Jewish misconceptions of prophetic teaching and human dreams of earthly empire. They were literally compelled to think in terms of Christ's thought and life. They readjusted themselves on the new basis and soon discovered that no loss was sustained and no

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vacuum encountered. As old things passed away, behold all things became new and all were rightly centered, for now, "all things are of God Who reconciled us to Himself through Christ."

As a religious truth, based on a historic fact, the crucifixion of Christ meets the deepest need of sinful man. It revealed sin in its real nature, opposition to law and hence opposition to the Author of law, but it also revealed the love of God which undertakes to reconstitute and revitalize man. If forgiveness requires, as has been said, "a perfect knowledge of the offense and a perfect restoration of love," then the basis for forgiveness has been securely laid by the vicarious death of Christ. John knows no other and Paul asserts that no other is possible, "other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid." Man's moral judgment finds complete satisfaction in the crucified Christ, while his rational nature obtains, through Him, important data and needed orientation.

Let us not seek, in the supposed progress of theology, to escape the idea that the crucifixion has its Godward aspect. Rather let us frankly confess that the mind of God finds therein complete expression respecting sin and obedience. His method with men is neither arbitrary nor legalistic for the sufficient reason that in His being and in His life God is neither. In the death of Christ upon the cross, God expresses His disapproval of sin. He makes known His justice as well as His mercy, and thereby convinces us that He is just and yet the justifier of all who believe in Christ, all



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who claim His mercy while acknowledging His justice. Prophets foretold the death of the Messiah because it is essential in the economy of grace and historians record it for the same reason. Enacted at Jerusalem, the center of Hebrew worship, it emptied the old order of its deep religious significance and opened the way for the coming of the Roman legions. It gave religion a new content and changed the very idea and theory of life. It broke the spell of evil which rested upon the spirit of man and accentuated the invitations of grace. It universalized revealed religion so effectually that the Christian centuries present to our view a mighty concourse of men from east and west, north and south, men who bowed low before the Crucified in humble confession of their sin and in earnest acceptance of His salvation; who entered the life in which they were rightly related to God and man; who understood what God meant, when, on their behalf, "He made Him to be sin Who knew no sin that they might become the righteousness of God in Him"; who cheerfully accepted the discipline of this present life by which they learned to appreciate "the mercy that endureth forever," and to regard with reverence the majesty that proceeds from the throne of God,

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS AND THE LIFE BEYOND DEATH.

The two subjects we have here linked together for study are worthy of separate treatment, but the two are so intimately related in the gospel narrative that we have deemed it best to consider them in a single chapter. Without the resurrection of Jesus we would know very little of the life beyond death, and without that life we would be left without conclusive proof of His resurrection. His death issues in His resurrection, and His resurrection marks His entrance into that life which is not subject to death. Here His humanity abides in the perfection of its powers, and His deity acts with a corresponding freedom and authority.

According to His own statement, the resurrection of Jesus was offered to His opposers as the one great proof of His Messiahship, and, as a consequence, of His sinless character, His power over evil, His divine life and leadership. It opens to all men the life beyond death, the life in which the spirit is free from all evil and all earthly limitations. It enables men to see that Jesus Christ is ever the same, ever true to Himself, always able to convey His thoughts to men, and always willing to direct their actions. He has passed the gates of death and yet has lost nothing, nothing of His human nature, which abides in all its elements and

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aspirations, while in the totality of His being He stands between God and man, God's self-revelation to man and man's intercessor with God.

Among the multitudes of earth and the myriads of heaven, Jesus Christ is easily distinguishable. His is the greatness of character, the sovereignty of righteousness. A scepter of uprightness is the scepter of His kingdom. His love of righteousness and His hatred of iniquity have found their perfect expression in His life and death and life again, all-vicarious, all-atoning, all-redemptive. Therefore, God hath anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows, and hath given Him a name which is above every name.

His is the greatness of goodness, the greatness of God, and this essential greatness cannot be concealed even in those darkest hours of His humiliation. His is not the greatness of genius, that calmly awaits its opportunity and then bursts forth with sudden and unexpected glory, nor yet the greatness that pales in obscurity unless surrounded with its appropriate accessories, but rather that essential, that personal greatness which is an attribute of His being and a constant fact of His life. He always *appears* great because He always *is* great, great in sympathy and soul and purpose, great as man is great, and great as God only is great. No demiurge can find room between God and man to trouble our faith or afflict our philosophy if we have an adequate knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Heathen deities afford us no aid, by comparison or contrast, in interpreting the Person of Christ.

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Sculptor and painter know the futility of casting Him in heroic mold. Historian and philosopher study His character and personality as the source and center of His greatness. He exists from within and not from without. The material world ministers to Him, but does not make Him. The mind of man conceives Him, but does not create Him. He offers Himself to men to be known and loved and obeyed, and these become the open paths of approach to this wonderful Person Who stands out in history in singular greatness and yet in sweet simplicity inviting men to come to Him and attracting them alike by His humanity and His divinity. If we have really seen Him as He appeared in that first century of the Christian era, and as John presents Him to our minds and hearts, then we are prepared to see and recognize Him in the subsequent centuries as the throbbing heart of history.

That first visit to the tomb by Mary Magdalene, "early while it was yet dark," and then the visit of Peter and John as a result of her report, reveal a personal interest and devotion such as we should expect, but disclose also a state of mind which sadly needs explanation, "For as yet they knew not the Scripture that He must rise again from the dead." Mary had evidently come to the rock-hewn tomb as to the grave of a friend, but when she found the tomb open, she quickly concluded that the Jews or the Romans had removed the body, depositing it she knew not where.

Such a report would be quite sufficient to bring Peter and John to the tomb to investigate for them-

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selves. They came in haste, but they examine the tomb at leisure. They enter and find "the linen cloths lying and the napkin that was upon His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself." They are thinking of the facts before them, the incidents that become evidence, the order in these wrappings that argues not merely the absence, but rather the resurrection, of the body of Jesus, the restoration of Jesus in the life and unity of His wonderful personality. The other disciple who came first to the tomb saw and believed "that Jesus had risen from the dead," thus modestly does John tell of His dawning faith. One at least, and perhaps both, are convinced, and have no further duty there, and "so the disciples went away again unto their own home."

They believed, not because of the Scriptures which seemed so plain, nor even the teaching of Jesus, which came closer still, but because the event made its own impression and the truth slowly dawned upon them. The religion of Jesus is not a religion of force and authority, but of intelligence and reason. It offers scientific evidence to each investigator, and thus affords a secure starting point for Christian faith. Seeing and knowing and believing, these are personal acts which individualize Christian faith and Christian life. Mary sees for Mary, Peter for Peter, and John for John, and to each one the risen Christ Himself is the only satisfactory and conclusive proof of the resurrection. The empty tomb contains not the body. They make no search for it. The only rational conclusion opens

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into religious faith and presently finds its complete confirmation in the established fact that He is risen.

Mary's first explanation of His disappearance on natural grounds, "they have taken away the Lord out of the tomb and we know not where they have laid Him," was not adopted by Peter and John. As they observe the linen cloths showing where the body lay, they come to the conclusion that no human hands removed them. They have a different explanation of the facts before them. Their minds have been lifted up by new and unexpected facts, and while they see these, they are looking far beyond.

But Mary lingers at the tomb where last she saw the face of Jesus chilled and unresponsive and fixed in death. What else could she do but stoop down again and look into the tomb, so empty and yet so suggestive? There she sees through her tears "two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain." She must have more evidence, and more evidence is given. The solemn statement in the burial ritual, "in the midst of life we are in death," was here reversed and in the midst of death she was in life. These angels, who, by their position, show their interest in Jesus, show their interest in Mary by their friendly inquiry, "Woman, why weepest thou?" Her answer is based on *her* theory and not on *their* knowledge. To them there is no cause for tears. She turned herself back, as though some one was near at the other side, and beheld Jesus standing and knew not that it was Jesus. His two

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questions, "Woman, why weepest thou?" "Whom seekest thou?" call forth an answer in harmony with her first explanation. But now He speaks her name, "Mary," with familiar tone and accent. She turned herself to address Him as Teacher, in the Hebrew language and in personal recognition, a memorable moment when the risen Christ conveyed to her mind for the first time the fact and thought and meaning of His resurrection.

But where was the intuition universally accorded to woman? Where was her memory of Christ's teaching? Where was her love for Him so long pre-eminent? All were there, but all were inoperative. How could intuition or memory or even love rise unaided to this new level of life? How could they define the risen Christ as their proper object? Mary was not required to do what she could not do. The risen Christ offers His welcome aid, and His personal presence calls forth her personal devotion on the higher plane of life. She is still teachable, affectionate, obedient, and He is still her Lord and Master. "Touch me not" is His first word of command and restraint to the one who first saw and conversed with Him after His resurrection. He assigns His reason as to an intelligent friend, "for I am not yet ascended unto the Father," His "I am" reflecting the present tense of the divine self-knowledge and His return to the Father pointing to a relation that supersedes all others. You want to do something for me, and this you can do, "go unto My brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and

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your God." He is acting in their interest while He is perfecting His relation to the Father, and His relation to His disciples will be renewed on this new plane of life and being. The relation of the disciples to the Father and to God is expressed in the same terms as His own, while His own stands by itself as an independent fact which precedes theirs and becomes the foundation of their relation to God as Father. His present teaching fits His former teaching with convincing accuracy. In mind and heart He is the same to Mary, if in body He seemed so different that at first she failed to identify Him. Her interview ended and her duty began. Her report to the disciples whom Jesus now calls "My brethren" has in it elements of internal evidence that support its truth. Mary brings her report, but prefaces it with her own testimony, "I have seen the Lord."

Time is a necessary factor in human life, and yet events may unfold rapidly if they come in their proper order. On the evening of this same day, the first day of the week, Jesus appeared to the assembled disciples when the doors were shut where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, whose enmity and active opposition were not allayed. He entered while the doors were shut, or shall we say in the words of John, "He came and stood in the midst," an act which ought to have identified Him in that little group. His coming and His presence are the facts emphasized. He is not conditioned by material substance or natural law, even though He appears in His natural body, presents it for their



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inspection, and thus demonstrates to them that it is the same body that suffered the wounds of the cross. He is a marked man, Whom they and all men may assuredly know. His first words to them, "Peace be unto you," they had heard Him speak often before, but now these words have a new significance as they fall from the lips of the Prince of peace. The disciples are invited to convince themselves that they have in their midst the same Person they previously knew and loved. They are given opportunity to complete their knowledge of Him, while His knowledge of them had never been destroyed or even interrupted. He presents the evidence they require, while they readjust their thought and theory to fit this new fact of spiritual life, the fact of resurrection, and the life beyond death, the life that is free from the guilt and power of sin, and hence also from its consequences and its perpetual penalty, the life which the risen Christ is even now enabling them to enter. Thus they knew Him as risen from the dead and "the disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord."

Only the risen Christ can establish the resurrection as a historic event and as a religious truth; He alone can fill out His own teaching concerning Himself and the outlines of prophecy in which the work of the Messiah is anticipated; He alone can respond to the longings of the human heart for a divine life and a true immortality. The risen Christ, the spiritual Christ, must somehow inspire and spiritualize men, men of time and earth, men of here and now, so that they may know Him, not after

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the flesh, but after the spirit. His earth-life is almost ended, and their Spirit-life should begin at once, for this is the real place of recognition. When His disciples had recognized Him and knew Him once more as the Lord, He said to them, "Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." They share His inner life of peace and likewise also His work among men. No ceremony ensues. No ritual makes His command more impressive. The risen Christ requires no adventitious aids in order to bestow His peace or commission His disciples for their mighty task.

He breathed on them as their present source of spiritual blessing and said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whosoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." The spiritual work they are called upon to do can be done by men who have received the Holy Spirit, and by no others. This is the next step in their personal preparation. Receive ye, for the Holy Spirit is now offered to them even as Christ offered Himself to them and has been received by them. Even so should they receive the Holy Spirit, under Whose divine wisdom and impulse they are to undertake and accomplish their spiritual work. As believers in Jesus, as sent by Him, as led by the Holy Spirit and inspired by Him, they can even minister God's forgiveness to men, or when required, refuse it in the same right. This is the real field of their activity—the mind, the character, the spirit of man sin-bound and sin-burdened, yet salvable and capable of entering the

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spiritual kingdom, knowing the saving power and rejoicing in the personal presence of the risen Christ.

In his old age, and after the testing of experience, the Apostle John offers no comment and thinks of no criticism concerning this divine program. Sin must be eliminated from human life by being eliminated from the human mind and heart. Sin is the bar to obedience and the attitude and state that God cannot bless or approve. Pardon is possible, and the life divine, the life spiritual, the life eternal. The ministry of forgiveness is committed to the Church as its perpetual inheritance from Him. If atonement for sin is essential in the work of Christ, the application of that atonement is essential in the work of the Christian Church. If salvation must be wrought into the life and consciousness of God, so must it be made real in the consciousness and life of every man who seeks salvation in Christ. If God comes to man's gate by way of the cross, man must come to God's gate by the same appointed path.

But Thomas, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus first manifested Himself to them. How regretful he must have been we are not told, but how doubtful and unbelieving he was forms part of the history and the psychology of the resurrection, a part that was perhaps not recorded until after his death. "The other disciples, therefore, said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the print

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of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." He refused to believe, or shall we say, he was not able to believe so great a fact on the combined testimony of his fellow-disciples, but required the same evidence they had received in order to satisfy his mind—the print of the nails in His hands and the wound in His side, the marks of Jesus which Thomas could not forget in three days, however dark, however long. If, indeed, He is alive, He will surely show these unmistakable marks and convince His doubting disciple as He had convinced all the rest. Only the risen Christ Himself can establish His resurrection in the mind of Thomas.

For eight long days Thomas maintained his suspended judgment, which, without evidence, must have become his settled conviction. Again "the disciples were within and Thomas with them," and again "Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst and said, Peace be unto you." We may easily believe that Thomas is the most interested person present. As such, Jesus addressed him and offers to him the very evidence he had demanded, without any repetition of his desire as previously expressed. This One Who reads the mind and heart is here before him, this One Who sums up humanity in Himself, this One Who reveals both God and man. But if these lines of spiritual identification are not sufficient to satisfy him, the evidence that appeals to sense will be given. "Reach hither thy finger and see My hands; and reach hither thy hand and put it into My side: and

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be not faithless but believing." He sees and hears and feels, and thus assures himself by sight and sound and touch that his doubt has no foundation outside of his own mind, and that faith must therefore take its place. Before him stands the One Who died upon the cross. He deals with Thomas individually and personally, and thus Thomas deals with Him. His identity cannot be questioned, and Thomas comes to his conclusion with absolute assurance. Jesus is before him, the Christ of the cross and the tomb. "My Lord and my God," is his cry of recognition and relief. His mind is not inert, his heart is not barren, nor is his will obdurate. Thomas is Thomas again in his own estimation and in that of His Master. His spirit has spoken. His confession of faith embraces the risen Christ as his divine Lord and Master, and the best and all he knows of God, the Person Whom he has known and loved, in Whom he has found life and leadership, and to Whom he owes an absolute allegiance.

Only Christ Himself, the risen Christ, can convey to the mind of man the thought and meaning of resurrection. He alone can lift us to the level of His own life, morally and spiritually. Like Thomas, we need the personal touch and contact at the point of our individual weakness. But let us remember that we are to know Him through His deity as well as through His humanity. Let us remember that man is less body than mind and spirit. Hence Jesus rebukes Thomas for basing his faith on his sight, and commends those who believe with-

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out seeing Him. "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." Happy is the man whose Christian faith rests upon the invisible Person. Our eyes see less than we think and only in our spirits do we really see God. The knowledge of God may come to men's minds variously mediated, but it ought also to be immediate, for faith is the direct approach to God. Above sight, and better than sight, is the spiritual insight we call Christian faith, a movement of the man, intellect, sensibility, and will, that presses into the presence of God, that claims Christ as its object and its vindication, and that knows Him as the Christ of humanity and the Christ of deity, the Christ of life and death and resurrection, man's perfect Savior, and God's perfect revelation of Himself.

Jesus has done all He promised to do, and hence the conclusion must hold that He *is* all He claimed to be. His resurrection must be regarded as a superhuman and a spiritual fact, attesting His divine Personality in the midst of human history, for it is also an accredited historic fact. Jesus is identified with men after His resurrection as well as before, and they knew Him as the same divine Person. His powers are enlarged or given a wider scope of action. He commissions His disciples to continue His work according to His conception and in contravention of their own, and by the means He has appointed for the spiritual conquest of the world.

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"Many other signs did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in His name." So few are the signs here given and yet so satisfactory to one who can read them aright, that John deems it his duty to explain the omission of so many. These are not all, but they are enough. The supreme manifestation of the Person of Christ in His death and resurrection leaves but little room or reason for any other manifestations of His humanity or demonstrations of His deity. Enough has been given to show that Christ is superior to death as the penalty of sin and the contradiction of life. The Person of Christ, in its elements and in its unity, in its relation to men and in its relation to God, remains unchanged by the destructive power of death. Henceforth, the risen Christ shows us human life beyond death as well as before death, and promises to place within believers the life that is eternal.

Often have we wondered that more was not told of a life that is so important. Perhaps we have found our explanation only when we fully realized that the supreme purpose of the Gospels is to manifest a person, and not merely to record His words and deeds. Hence we must press into the very presence of the Christ and see Him for ourselves. We must see Him as He is. We must get this direct, personal knowledge, for nothing less can answer our real need. We must see Him through the honest, appreciative eyes of John and of all the rest

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of His disciples. We must see Him also through the envious eyes of His enemies. We must see Him by faith in immediate vision until we can truly say, we have seen the Lord. We must see Him and know Him until we are sure He sees and knows us and is willing to call us by name and commission us to do His work.

Like a modern Thomas, the poet, Richard Watson Gilder, has given expression to his personal convictions.

“If Jesus Christ is a man—  
And only a man—I say  
That of all mankind I cleave to Him,  
And to Him will I cleave always.

“If Jesus Christ is a God—  
And the only God—I swear  
I will follow Him thro’ heaven and hell,  
The earth, the sea, and the air.”

For the third time in the course of our study of John’s Gospel, we have come to a climactic manifestation of Jesus as the Christ. The first is His public entry into Jerusalem, when He is proclaimed the King of Israel as the natural outcome of His public ministry, the spontaneous outburst of popular feeling, and the fulfillment of God’s purpose as declared in prophecy. The second closes His teaching concerning the divine life of men with His sublime prayer, in which He beholds God, the Father, with unveiled face, and links the divine with the human and the human with the divine. The third



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shows Him as the Messiah, born to die as well as to live, and as the spiritual Liberator and Leader of men, over Whom death has no power, the One Who combines in Himself the natural and the supernatural, the historic and the spiritual, the visible and the invisible, humanity and deity, a Personality that demands both a human and a divine recognition. The first reveals to us the historic Christ, the second the spiritual Christ, and the third unites both in its supreme appeal to men, whatever their moral attitude or their spiritual development.

Let us not think of John as a rhetorician, but rather as a historian, a philosopher, and a religious leader. Let us think of these three climaxes in the fourth Gospel as the summits of the ascending thought, the mountain tops where God and man may meet. John has found language with which to express the thoughts that fill his mind because his thought has first been written in personality and character and life. He is a master of words because he is a master of ideas. He has a new knowledge to communicate. He knows in the same sense God teaches. He has come to God's gate as truly as God has come to his; being has answered to being, the less to the Greater, and the Greater to the less; this mutual relation has developed until the Galilean fisherman has become the beloved disciple, the apostle of Jesus Christ, and the spiritual interpreter of his human friend and his divine Savior.

What themes for human thought, the resurrection of Jesus and the life beyond death! What thoughts

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these themes are calculated to awaken in men who desire to know their own natures and their own needs; thoughts of life in its length and breadth, its height and depth. Life and immortality have been brought to light, and men are now enabled to contemplate their own life with God as its interpreter. Theirs is the kingdom, the opportunity for spiritual culture and spiritual ministry under divine direction. The kingdom belongs to them and they belong to the kingdom. They are to be perfected in its life and liberty and by word and example to make known to men beyond its farthest frontiers their purchased privilege of entrance. If the call is universal, the coming of millions degrades not this kingdom nor lessens the glory of a single soul. The ordinary Christian bears at least one mark that distinguishes him, he is spiritual in the Christian sense. His individuality is first saved and then sanctified. A new hope inspires him and he looks out upon a new prospect. The power of custom and caste has been broken and he acts with increasing freedom in his devotion to higher ideals. He learns anew the great words of religious life, truth, and law and atonement, salvation and service and suffering, sanctification and association and worship.

Men who enter this life have vision of things spiritual as well as things temporal. They see and know the nobler things and seek them with concentrated energies. They accept God's interpretation of human life and realize its truth as they work out their own transformation. Duty becomes privilege,

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praise the vernacular of the spirit, and prayer the open path of approach to God. "Our Father Who art in heaven" is to be spoken in direct address with the assurance that God in heaven hears. Men draw near to God by faith because God draws near to men in Christ and by the Holy Spirit. This drawing together of God and man makes it possible for men to come closer to each other. The Christian Church is a psychological product as well as a religious organization. It has its own peculiar bond of unity and its own inspiring ideals. The Holy Spirit manifests His presence in the assembly of saints just as Jesus, after His resurrection, appeared to His disciples but not to the world. The presence of the Spirit completes the company when believers assemble in the name of Christ, unifies them in one body, and awakens within them the consciousness of God.

Then let the resurrection of Christ teach us all it taught the first disciples. Let it bring to us its message, not only from the fourth Gospel, but also from the other three, and particularly from the Epistles. For the moment, we may wisely set aside our purpose to confine our attention to the one book under review. In his First Epistle, Peter makes this impressive reference to the subject now in hand. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who according to His great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who

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by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." In his Epistle to the Colossians, Paul makes this practical application: "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God." In his First Epistle, John tells us what all Christians ought to know by personal experience. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God; and such we are. For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be."

Returning once more to our Gospel, we read the words of our Lord from our present viewpoint. "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on Me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die." The body suffers death, or separation from the spirit, but the spirit lives by faith on the Son of God. It suffers no separation from Him for the reason Paul assigned in the eighth chapter of Romans, it rests under no condemnation. The Christian follows Christ all the way, even through death and resurrection, in order to reach the life beyond death, since association with Christ is the essential thing in Christian life.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### A PERSONAL INTERVIEW.

The last chapter of the Gospel of John has been regarded by certain writers as a supplement or post-script containing facts that were subsequently added by the author himself or perhaps by some other hand. They believe that this chapter did not originally belong to the book, which really ended with chapter twenty, and that it was written to explain why "John's service upon earth lasted so much longer than Peter's." However, it is admitted that as a supplement it belongs to the book to which it is appended, notwithstanding the fact that it has but little connection from a literary, historical, or doctrinal point of view.

Like the fifth and seventh chapters, the twenty-first opens with the words, "after these things," a loose connecting phrase which serves the writer's purpose by indicating in a general way the order of events. If the change of subject seems to be abrupt, let us bear in mind that we have observed at least two other equally abrupt changes in the body of the book. Let us also consider the fact that the longer service of John, as compared with that of Peter, would scarcely interest the Christian Church, for whom this Gospel was especially prepared. If this last chapter shows this one fact as some believe, may it not also show much more? May it not be linked to the body of the book by a

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logical connection that is both clear and convincing? What reader would think of stopping at the close of the twentieth chapter and deliberately leaving the twenty-first unread? What thinking mind fails to note the logical necessity of pursuing the thought to its completion in this account of the gathering again of the scattered followers of our Lord? What student of the written Word does not desire the reassertion of the principle of personal life through Christ and personal devotion to Christ which characterizes His followers? The teaching of Jesus must be made operative in order to fill up its own content. Perhaps this conception of Christian doctrine may afford us the clue to the proper interpretation of this closing chapter of the book and this initial chapter in a new movement in religious life and religious service.

By carefully surveying this portion of our text, we discover that it shows us, in addition to what has already been considered, that the risen Christ could give success to His disciples in their ordinary occupation as fishermen; that He could associate with them in a friendly, human way after His resurrection; that He wished to restore Peter to a right state of mind and a right relation to Himself; that He proposed to establish right personal relations with each and all of His disciples; that He outlined the earthly careers of Peter and John as though He knew the future of both, being personally interested in each, however different; that He never leaves Himself out of the account as if He were ever to be unknown and inactive; that

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Christ always considers Himself the real leader and commander of His people; that He proposes to continue His work in the world by means of His disciples who are bound to Him by personal ties that call for a corresponding personal devotion.

The disciples of Jesus are believers who are thus personally related to God and to each other. They are not under law, but under grace. Legalism is not the Christian's status, the Christian's doctrine, or the Christian's life, nor is ecclesiasticism the bond of Christian union. No existing religious organization obscured this truth, and no future organization should be permitted to obscure it, a truth which receives peculiar emphasis in the twenty-first chapter, thus linking it practically and theoretically with all that has been taught in the other twenty. A recent writer declares that "the great truth that Jesus is the Son of God, the divine Lord, is also the central, unifying thought of the postscript." Here this doctrine has a practical application which carries it out to its completion. Men are to be Christian day by day. The Christian life is real as well as ideal. Christian doctrine must be illustrated in personal life. The living Christ establishes the resurrection as a historic fact and a religious doctrine, and the living Christian is called upon to establish his Christian character and spiritual life and give to both their proper substance and reality.

Jesus manifests Himself to His disciples at the Sea of Tiberias in view of His absence and His separation from them. His human nature manifests itself and also His divinity, for both are now for-

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ever wrapped together in one Person. He comes to remind His disciples of Himself and also of themselves, for they are evidently drifting back to their old occupation. He comes to call them to duty and to prepare them for their extraordinary work. At least three things distinguish this seaside interview: the miraculous draught of fishes by which they knew Him, the unexpected breakfast by which they share His company once more, and the spiritual restoration of Peter by which He pointed out the essential thing in Christian life, namely, a right personal relation to Himself.

Without any word of introduction, John, and then Peter, and all the rest, recognize Jesus by the miraculous draught of fishes, for who but Jesus could thus declare Himself? Christians must learn to know their Lord at sight and to interpret aright the lessons He teaches by word and deed. He is even able to assist them in making a living, for He governs in temporal as well as in spiritual things, and hence their faith in Him should expand in every direction. The breakfast they all enjoy on that memorable morning was provided partly by Him and partly by themselves, typifying continued co-operation. His identity is unquestioned, for He possesses the same power, the same purpose, the same propriety of act, and the same personal presence they had learned to know so well.

They have taken an unusual number of fish, their fast has been broken, and now they can consider spiritual things which are not less important to them. Peter was impatient to come into the pres-



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ence of Jesus once more and to respond in obedience to His commands, but this is not all he needs in order to secure spiritual restoration and enjoy personal freedom. That piercing, personal question, "Simon, son of John, lovest thou me?" twice repeated with only one change in its form, reminds Peter of the days before Jesus renamed him, and calls out an ever-deepening answer, till Peter casts himself confidently upon the superior knowledge of Jesus. "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Peter was thoroughly grieved before he was thoroughly relieved. A threefold denial of Christ called for a threefold confession of faith in Him. Peter's sin affected his associates as well as himself, and his correction was for them as well as for him. The superior knowledge of Christ and His clearer consciousness afford the best basis for the knowledge of Peter. The mind of Christ is at once rational and trustworthy, clear and constant. If Peter is less self-reliant now, he evidently relies upon Christ by that much more, and thus Christ, the risen Christ, becomes the foundation of his inner life. This may be called the realism of mysticism. The love of Christ is not only general and universal, but also personal and particular, so that the one who is its object may respond in like manner. "The Lord demanded positive, unmistakable love because that grace pre-eminently determines character," says the last author quoted. "What a man loves reveals unerringly what he is. This chapter, then, so full of varied and interesting incident, is instinct with one great

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thought, the genuine love of the disciple for his Master." The gospel of Christ must be written in character and life, it must develop into personality. It is a real gospel for real life. Professor Thayer reckoned as the central, all-conquering truth of Christianity, "Personal loyalty to a personal Master, the crucified, risen, reigning Christ." We are, therefore, inclined to conclude that whether or not the last chapter of John is a supplement or post-script, its importance appears in that it illustrates this central truth in a way that has its special value for Christians to-day as well as for the original actors. Its worth is practical as well as theoretical or doctrinal. In this connection, Professor Marcus Dods, in his commentary, asks and answers the question, "What is Christianity?" "God's way of getting hold of us, of attaching us to what is good, of making us holy, perfect men, and the method He uses is the presentation of goodness in a personal form." So Christ must appear to His followers even as they are thus to appear to men, for as the philosopher, Eucken, has said, "Personality becomes the channel through which a higher world is revealed."

Jesus demands Peter's love for Himself, "Lovest thou Me?" as though that were the complete equivalent of love to God. Christ is consistent. He is God revealed to human eyes and in keeping with His self-revelation, He has chosen personality—clarified Christian personality—in which to lodge His bequest to the world. His disciples thus become the conscious and voluntary agents of His will.

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To the attentive ears of the restored Peter, Jesus reads his future life in its general outlines, for Peter has a future now that is definite and readable. His early life was marked by impulse and independence, but this old age will be conditioned by dependence and restraint, and end in a death which will glorify God. Dependence, as well as independence, are measured to him in the circle of his life and the slowly unfolding curriculum of his spiritual discipline.

John's future history is dimly indicated in the compass of one short sentence, "If I will that he tarry till I come"—the will of Christ is to govern his coming years and appoint the hour of his departure. John offers no objection to this exercise of the right of complete control, for it is all implied in the present harmony of his will with the will of the Master, it is the basis for comfort and not complaint, it is the one assurance of his life amid the unseen toils and trials of other years. Surely the years of a greatly lengthened life, the added days of faithful service, the unfaltering faith of this Christian man, and the unbending orthodoxy of this great apostle fulfilled Christ's pregnant prophecy. His life ended only when his task was done and his presence was no longer required in the church and in the world. As he calmly closes his career, he becomes the rear guard of this wonderful procession that passed across the stage of action and left its record on the pages of history. Behold that procession that begins with the Word, the divine Word, as He steps from eternity into time, and that ends

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as St. John, the divine, steps from time into eternity. This last great leader sees just where he belongs in this wonderful procession and offers his written testimony to call forth the faith of those who follow in this continuous, world-wide concourse as it presses on in its marvelous movement. He forms a part of history, looking backward and also looking forward, in which he finds Jesus Christ as the one great, central Figure, and faith in Him as the one supreme duty of every man. As this great procession continues to move across the stage of time, new leaders will appear and new manifestations will be given, definite manifestations of the presence and power of this same divine Person, Who explains history, Who rationalizes human life, Who harmonizes the soul within itself and with its God, Who is the supreme expression of God's love to man, and Who is the Prophet, Priest, and King, whether we consider His relation to the individual or the race.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### CONCLUSION.

In our present study of the fourth Gospel, which we here conclude, we have sought to press into the presence of Jesus by the most direct mental method that lies open to us. History gives us the facts we require, but history must be read as well as written. The facts which the historian has here selected from the mass before him, the different men he portrays, and the various movements he describes are all done in brief, if not in miniature, yet true to life in its essential nature and in its real relations. The task of the reader is to enter into sympathy with the writer and thus make that initial mental connection that links him to the historic group he desires to enter and understand.

Thus, and thus only, can we appreciate the men of the past, the meaning of their words, and the significance of their acts. Through the mind of John we come to the mind of Jesus, through his consciousness we enter the consciousness of the Christ. We know John better than we know Jesus, because there is no mystery about his life except such as we find in our own. He is one of us. He lends us his mental machinery and opens other minds so that we see their action in relation to Jesus and thus interpret the One Whom we really want to know. But the mind of Jesus is opened to us also by His own word and act. He reveals Himself and so re-

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veals God, and we, too, behold His glory as of the only begotten from the Father. We, too, begin to see for ourselves in immediate, mental vision.

Our most direct view of Jesus is that which Christ Himself opens to us by the aid of the Holy Spirit, Who is the supreme interpreter of Christ to every human soul. The divine One Whom John knew, we also know, for "the Son abides in the house forever." Two intelligent beings cannot fail to meet when one of the two is God. Men walk like children into the outstretched arms of Deity. In the experiences of life they cannot avoid knowing Him, and they may know Him as He is manifested in the Person of Jesus Christ, our Savior, and our Lord. They can know Him and the power of His resurrection, for ultimately all men must walk by faith and not by sight. Ultimately the gates of sense will close and the spirit of man must rely upon its own inherent powers of perception. Spiritual vision and spiritual knowledge will be all that remain, or shall we say that these processes of the mature mind have permanently vacated the object lessons of the kindergarten of life. Men are adapted to see in spiritual vision the very One Whom John thus saw in those after years when the visible presence of Jesus was punctuated by His ascension. Men are still contending with the Christ or co-operating with Him, they are still writing their own history, which is essentially pagan or essentially Christian.

If we are inclined to wonder at the clearness of John's conception of Christ and his consistency of

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thought as stated in his Gospel, we must call to mind the fact that back of John are Jesus and the Holy Spirit. He portrays a Person Whom he esteems both human and divine, but Whose character is simple and comprehensible and always issues in consistent action. Christ casts no shadows around Him. John rejoices in His presence and there frees himself from preconceived ideas and materialistic philosophy. "The final gospel is the gospel of the essential and eternal," says President Henry G. Weston. "It is the personal gospel. The divine persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are presented in Their order, each in His distinct sphere and each in His relation to the others, while a personal relation to a personal Being comprises all that is necessary for perfect conduct and character."

John appreciates personality as the highest form of being, whether viewed as existing or as manifesting its existence and its nature. He appreciates the material world and human life in time, at their full value, but he does not stop with these as though they were our best or our all, but passes on into the timeless, spaceless state which the spirit enters by faith in Jesus Christ. To him, nature is God's handiwork, the product of His creative will, the field of human life and action. To him, history is the field of human choice and development on the one hand, and on the other of divine interest and intervention that links all deity with all humanity by the bonds of God's own wisdom and love. Hence he describes being, good and evil, from God on the one hand to Satan on the other, with perfect free-

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dom, yet with perfect appreciation of his several subjects.

The sacred historian must enter the sacred precincts of the soul and report its motives as well as its acts. He must read the thoughts and intents of the heart, and as we study the Gospel of John, we cannot but wonder how clearly the mind of friend and foe lie open before him. Surely he has been with Jesus and learned of Him. Hence he sees body and soul, related, separated, reunited. He knows the human will as free, and so depicts its movements. He belongs to the company he describes, however modest his references to himself. He is not afraid of his own religion and his own philosophy, because both are true for his intellect, his sensibilities, and his will. They fit the man because they are derived directly from Christ, Whom John portrays with the skill of an artist, the earnestness of an advocate, and the insight of a philosopher.

We have already observed that John's viewpoint is that of the metaphysician rather than that of the ordinary historian. He teaches us how to think of reality, especially the highest kind of reality. He exhibits personality with startling plainness and directness of presentation. His portrait of the Person of Christ appears to be unstudied, yet marvelously concise and complete. This perfect personality occupies the center of his canvass and enables him to show the personality of man as it is dwarfed or developed, its latent possibilities, and its God-



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given powers. This central Personality gives to his Gospel its content and consistency.

John's philosophy is the legitimate product of his religion, and not the reverse. Hence both are Christian. Both have the same center. His thinking begins with the facts he observed, the principles he tested, and the persons he knows, all his thought and all his knowledge centering in Jesus Christ, Who explains all else and Who is Himself self-evidencing and self-explanatory, like any ultimate truth. John never loses Christ as the center of his system of thought and life. If he teaches, it is as one who has been taught; if he commands, it is as one who obeys. He never snatches Christ's scepter of authority out of His hand, nor does he ever assume to know more than his Master. He is Christ's disciple, and not his critic. He is no mere speculator, as Christ is no mere actor. John developed the doctrines he taught to their logical conclusions and needed no disciple to complete what he had only begun. Human philosophy develops from age to age, and shows stages of progress and great names that are linked forever with great ideas, but the divine philosophy of Jesus has no stages of progress save in the human apprehension of it from age to age. The statements of John remain as clear-cut as when they were first made, and bear no marks of subsequent modification or revision. His conclusions have all the solidity of his premises because the movement of his mind is not reactionary but direct, not negative but positive. He apprehends truth by direct approach, and not by a lateral

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movement, as though truth were only a compromise of contending ideas or the opposite of error. His philosophy, like his religion, has substance and positive content.

The incarnation forms the foundation of John's theory of things, of thought, and of life. He therefore begins with revelation, which is God's thought, to which he adapts man's thought, for man's thinking must connect with God's thinking somewhere. John is not humiliated by this condition, but on the contrary, highly exalted thereby. The condition liberates instead of limits, and his thought soars like the eagle in its flight. A new expansive power enters his mind and heart when he accepts Jesus Christ as God manifest in the flesh, God revealed in personality, the self-revelation of God and the only revelation possible, since man is not able by searching to find out God or even to call forth His wisdom, His power, and His love in their divine plenitude and perfection. God appears in the flesh, assuming the form of a servant, that He may conquer sin and prepare the way for the indwelling of the Spirit in every human heart and the governing of all men by His holy will. The divine Presence is real, active, effective, amid the strife and conflict of human life. Men are called upon to believe in God as present in Christ with all that this implies, the forsaking of sin, the personal knowledge of pardon, the sanctification of the believer, the service of love. Faith is the human condition of the Christian life, individual and social. The great truths John teaches have their perma-

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ment place in his theory of redemption and their corresponding consequences here and hereafter.

John seeks insight rather than outlook, the former being first in order and in importance, and the latter following naturally and without undue effort. He must know the fundamental principles of Christ's teaching, for these will shape all his conclusions. In the book of the Revelation, which was no doubt written before His Gospel, he has given us a marvelous view of the future of the church and the world, and even the analogies he presents in his Gospel are all prophetic, but his supreme desire is to enter the very soul and center of God's kingdom of truth and righteousness and love. He devotes himself to great facts, great doctrines, and great persons. He knows them all, relatively and in themselves. No other disciple in that little group of twelve entered into such perfect sympathy with Jesus, by which he was prepared to set forth with peculiar power the vital element of the gospel. His sympathetic insight into the life of Jesus, his intimate knowledge of the Person of Christ, his deep appreciation of the teachings of our Lord and the redemptive work wrought by Him, are all clearly expressed or tacitly implied in the fourth Gospel, and all unite in opening to the thoughtful mind the widest window that overlooks human life, past, present, and future.

It is only natural for us to seek some brief outline that will adequately express the substance of John's thought and offer its convenient aid in grouping and remembering the same. We naturally

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desire to make John's doctrine more usable and so more serviceable. The outlines which are often given, appear involved and cumbersome rather than concise and convenient, while some are satisfactory and serve their purpose. Our effort in this direction has been to gather the truth of the fourth Gospel into an organic system and thus reveal its unity and render the whole more comprehensible.

The principle of unity we naturally expect to discover in the Gospel of John, appears in two ways: First, in the Person of Christ, and, second, in the purpose of the author; the subject of thought and the object of discourse, the two foci of the same ellipse. The purpose of John springs directly from the Person of Christ and yet offers its own independent viewpoint and principle of unity. According to the first principle, the general order is that of the Gospel, but each part runs through the whole just as the muscular system, the osseous system, the vascular system, and the nervous system, each and all, are distributed through the whole body. According to the second principle, the practical conclusion is reached by means of the four main lines of division which our present study has developed.

Taking up the second principle first, we find the unity of the Gospel of John plainly appearing in the one great purpose for which the book was written, namely, that men may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing may have life in His Name, the extra temporal life, the eternal life, the spiritual and divine life, which Christ came to confer. Three separate movements of thought

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converge in this one purpose, making it possible for men to believe, if not impossible for them not to believe.

The first movement is set forth in chapters one to twelve, in which we are told of the manifestation of the Messiah to Israel and to mankind, His divine character and Person being asserted in the very first verse and further revealed as He mingles with men until He publicly rides into the national capital according to prophetic announcement.

The second movement comprises five chapters, the thirteenth to the seventeenth. The individual dealing and personal ministry of the thirteenth leads us to the fourteenth, in which personal religion or the divine life of men is described. Social service in the fifteenth is naturally followed by spiritual leadership in the sixteenth, which prepares us for the seventeenth, the wonderful prayer in which Jesus comes unhindered into the presence of God. The inference that men are to do likewise is the more easily drawn since Jesus is here represented as man's spiritual leader.

The third movement, described in four chapters, eighteen to twenty-one, reveals Christ as the divine Redeemer, Who occasions the supreme manifestation of sin, when the innocent One is rejected, judicially condemned, and suffers as though guilty, and Who makes atonement for sin by being obedient to God even unto death, the penalty of sin, death as man's Messiah and man's spiritual Leader, and Who demonstrates by His triumphant resurrection His power over sin and death, and above all, His

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Messianic character and spiritual leadership. His redemptive work embodies in itself both preceding movements, the Messianic or historic, and the Christological or spiritual, since the death and resurrection of Christ are both historical and spiritual. Christ is alike the Head of the individual and of the race, the Leader of humanity in its cosmic and in its spiritual life.

Without the promised Messiah, men could not believe, for they would still await His coming; without a spiritual Leader Who is able to show them the way and share the responsibility of life here and hereafter, men could not believe because a dependent being requires leadership; without a divine Redeemer Who is able to relieve the guilty conscience and restore the soul to unity within itself and to its right relation to God men could not believe since sin is universal; but with these demands of man's rational, moral, and religious nature properly met, men cannot refuse to believe without doing violence to their own natures as intelligent, moral, and religious beings.

As we are able to find the unity of the Gospel of John taking its rise in the purpose of the author, so also we may discover that it proceeds from the Person of Christ, the great central Figure, in Whom all things consist, all teaching, all doctrine, all life, all power. He it is Who exhibits the simplicity and the sublimity of a true personality rightly constituted and rightly related, without internal division, contradiction, or conflict, because perfectly harmo-

## The Inner Witness of the Fourth Gospel

nious as human and as divine, and also as both united in one being.

The unity of doctrine which lies deeply imbedded in John's thought and which illuminates his pages from first to last may be set forth as follows:

- I. He presents the Word, Who rightly reveals God to man.
  1. In His divine life and divine relations.
  2. In His human life and human relations.
- II. He presents Jesus, Who rightly realizes God's thought of man.
  1. In man's divine life and divine relations.
  2. In man's human life and human relations.
- III. He presents Jesus Christ in Whom God and man are rightly related, and Who recalls men to a life of obedience.
  1. By intercession, fellowship, and communion with God.
  2. By revealing defective personality and making atonement for it.
  3. By appealing in resurrection life and power to human personality.

John introduces his central Figure in his first sentence, and at the close of his book, after he has established his thesis, he states his one great purpose. The doctrine he teaches leads to the duty he requires, and the duty finds ample justification in the doctrine.

Each attempt to summarize the Gospel of John is likely to drive us back to the text with which we began, and with which we should always end. This it is that opens to us the mind of John and through

## Conclusion

him admits us into the mind of the Master. We are enabled to see our Divine Lord in immediate vision and come to Him by direct approach. Here we enter the new life that is forever new; here we rise into a new consciousness that claims Christ as its living source and center; here we are inspired with a new hope whose anchor holds within the veil. Doubt is dispelled, the doubt that clings so close and claims so much, and faith fills out the spirit in its true type and proportions according to the thought of John and Jesus, and as the proper product of a book that was written to enable men to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

"Whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed," such is the explicit admission, such is the confident prophecy of a man who rejected the miracles of Christ, denied His deity, and interpreted His life according to the assumptions of the legendary theory. Because He is "the goal of all goodness, the summit of all thought, the perfection of all beauty, the crown of all character," Jesus Christ cannot be lightly set aside by any intelligent mind even when that mind is linked in personal life with an unbelieving heart. Thus it becomes true once more that

"Their rock is not as our Rock,

Even our enemies themselves being judges."

Christ cannot be ignored or wholly discredited. He must be considered, and considered apart from all other men. Here is One Who stands alone according to the testimony of friend and foe, believer and unbeliever. His Name is above every name



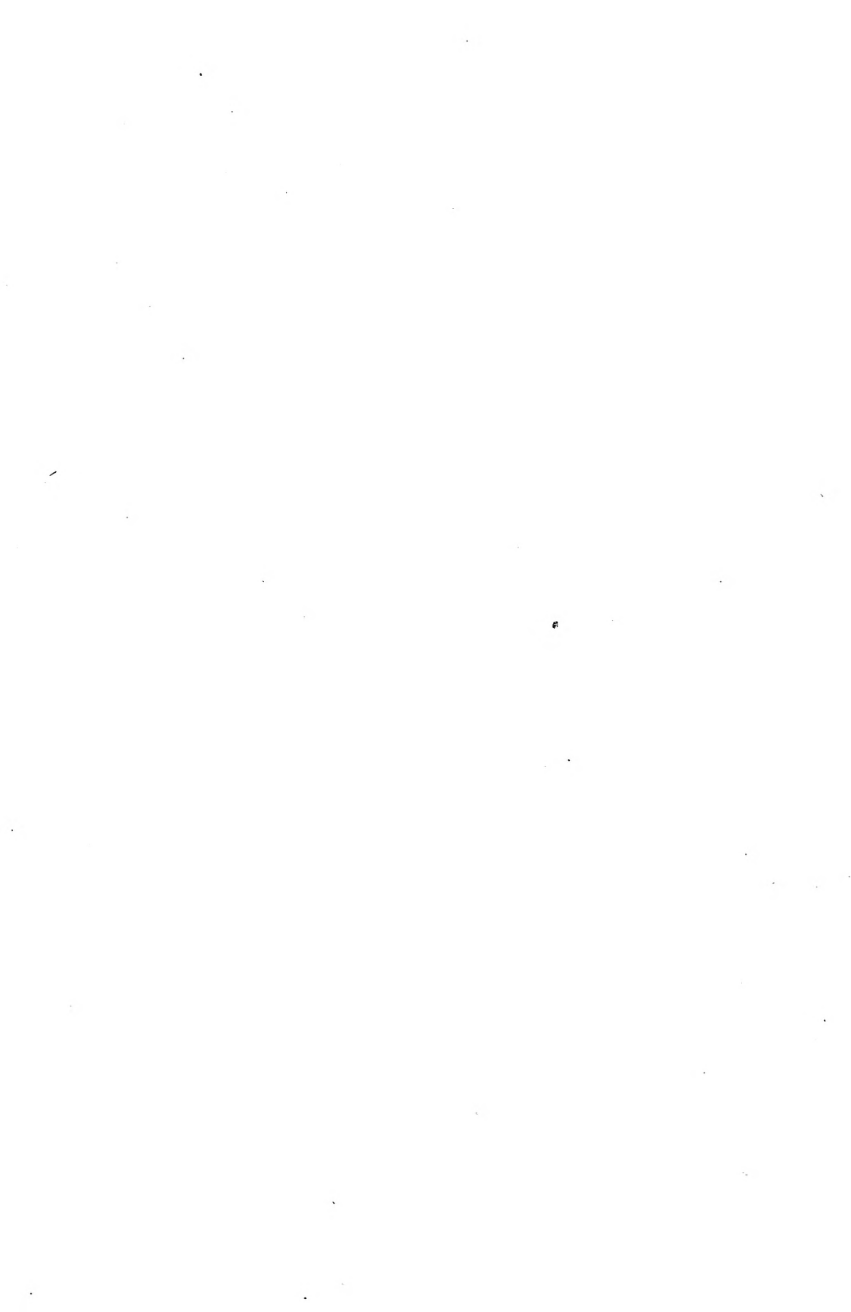
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because of its own essential superiority. There may be another Lincoln or Washington, another Shakespeare or Milton, another Dante or Plato, but not another Christ. Other names can be linked together, Cæsar and Alexander, Napoleon and Wellington, Longfellow and Tennyson, Wesley and Whitefield, Cromwell and Lincoln, but the name of Jesus stands alone. God hath given Him a name which is above every name. If we would associate His name with another, we must seek it in the sacred records of revelation; in the baptismal formula in which Christ co-ordinates Himself with the Father and the Holy Spirit; in the devotional atmosphere of the Christian Church as it finds expression in the doxology,

“Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow,  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”

Thus we conclude our present study of the fourth Gospel with our minds fixed upon the same Person and the same doctrine that claimed our attention when we took up John's initial statement, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”





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